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SCENES FROM THE GHETTO:

312

Studies of Jewish Life.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

LEOPOLD KOMPERT.

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SCHLEMIEL.

SCENES FROM THE GHETTO.

SCHLEMIEL.

Out of a hundred persons of whom you ask the true meaning of the word schlemiel, certainly ninety-nine will take off their hats and very politely beg your pardon for not knowing. The hundredth who will alone be able to tell you, is precisely your servant; and although this avowal may not be altogether modest, he will now undertake the task simply because no one else will do so.

Has a man heavy, awkward manners? They would say of him in the ghetto, "He is a *schlemiel.*" The schlemiel, whenever he drops his bread-and-butter, lets it fall on the buttered side, and while others seize opportunities by the head, the schlemiel almost invariably takes hold of the foot and allows them to escape. In all things he has bad luck. Every morning throughout his whole life he gets up as it were on his left leg. He scarcely knows Fortune otherwise than in a mood which would make a general wish that

goddess on the side of his enemy. Put gold into the hand of the schlemiel, and the inhabitants of the ghetto will tell you that he will change it into copper: give him copper, and he will turn it into an inferior kind of lead, unfit even to make a bullet for blowing out one's brains. We see then what a misfortune it is to be born a schlemiel. But it is still more than this; it is a veritable fatum.

I have long been asking myself whether it would not be rash on my part to wish to describe a fatum of this sort. If one—say an author—wants to play with a poignard rusted by such a fatum he ought from the very first moment to exercise extreme care in handling it, lest the weapon, coming suddenly, as it were, to think and to reflect, should turn against him. Thus, after perusing this story to the last page, more than one reader may be inclined to observe—

"There is an author who has written the history of a schlemiel, and he is one himself."

No matter! The depicted schlémiel and he who depicts him will find their way to the same immortality; for it is certain that the schlemiel is immortal, and the last man to quit this world will without doubt be the last schlemiel.

For the rest I am happy to say that in this history of a fatum the leading part is played not by a poignard, but by an old house. It is easier to guard against the fall of a dwelling than the blow of a dagger.

One day the inhabitants of the ghetto had long been expecting the three well-known knocks which with a mallet the beadle was accustomed to give at each door as a notice that it was time to attend the synagogue. These knocks meant now that a death had occurred in the street; and those of the faithful who, without waiting for the beadle, made their way towards the synagogue, learned that in the night Rebb Isserl Gloser had suddenly succumbed to a fit of apoplexy. Most of the pedestrians who heard the news contented themselves with exclaiming devoutly, "*Boruch Dajin Emès!*"* for the morning was cold, and icicles hung from the eaves of the houses.

Before that large two-storied abode adjoining the butcher's might have been observed at a very early hour two men, each with a *thaleth*† under his arm, engaged in a long conversation. One of them, who was young and very graceful in figure,

* "Praised be the Supreme Judge!" This is the usual formula pronounced on learning the death of an inhabitant of the ghetto.

† A silken veil with which a person covers himself to pray more fervently.

gazed a while with two roguish eyes at the window of the apartment where the corpse lay, and then inquired—

"Well, Koppel, how long do you give him yet?"

"Give whom?" asked the other. "Do you mean Rebb Isserl Gloser? He has been dead nearly two hours."

"Idiot!" returned the first speaker, "do you think I don't know what I am saying? I have not gone mad. I mean his son—Schlemiel."

"May I die," protested Koppel, "may I die if I understand you. You mean Schlemiel?"

"Now mark what I am going to say," said the man with the fine figure, his eyes at this moment presenting a singular expression; "but first of all tell me whether to your knowledge Schlome Katz ever lied, exaggerated, or bragged to anybody?"

To this question Koppel had nothing to say, and remained silent.

"Listen, then," continued the astute speaker. "Before ten years have passed you will see looking out at the window of the apartment which now contains the body of Rebb Isserl Gloser a certain man warmly enveloped in a luxurious dressing gown like that worn by the rich administrator of our community. He will be smoking a large silver-mounted pipe, and his name will be Schlome Katz."

"Are you mad? Schlome!" cried Koppel with a laugh.

"Laugh as much as you like," returned the other. "Look upon me, if you choose, as a liar, and say that I am not even worth spitting on. Recollect, however, the proverb which our peasants repeat: 'You show me the window, and I see the door.' Rebb Isserl Gloser is not yet buried, and I already see myself at his window. But, blockhead as you are, know that I must first enter by the door to drive out the Schlemiel, and that not until this has been done shall I put on my dressing gown. Within ten years hence, if you are passing this place, I will ask you to exercise your memory, and say, 'Koppel, did I not tell you that this house was mine?'"

Schlome had spoken with animation. When he had finished Koppel regarded him fixedly in the eyes. Then he replied naïvely—

"On my life, Schlome, I believe as people say that you ought to succeed in all your projects; it was not in vain that you were named Schlome Katz. Like a true cat you have observed the death of Rebb Isserl Gloser, and are now ready to spring upon the Schlemiel. Spring as often as you like, only first make certain that you will not alight in the next world."

"A perfect schlemiel!" briefly and irritably ex-

claimed Schlome, who then quitted the scene and walked along a little adjacent street. Koppel went another way.

The conversation had been one of those which deal with nothing less than a person's whole wealth and safety, on which speculations have already been made, without his being in the least able to prevent this sort of mental attack, this act of brigandage committed on his future. The reader knows that we are now in front of Schlemiel's house; and if there are certain details with which he is unacquainted, they shall be communicated forthwith. Meanwhile, it is to be regretted that not a word of this conversation reached the ears of Schlemiel, to whom it would have been more valuable than if his father had left him another house and some additional thousands of florins.

Our schlemiel belonged to that class of men which is to be found only in the ghetto. Anschel was his real name; but since his thirteenth year, the inhabitants of the ghetto had always called him Schlemiel. Anschel had at that time made his *bar-mitzveh*, or in other words had attained the age at which, according to our rabbis, man is capable of supporting the burden of the 613 commandments of God, official as well as adjunctive. Formerly in the East the sun soon ripened the blood of Jewish children: why should

not the same sun have the same effect in our German climate where, however, snow often falls at Easter? This day of initiation to the life of a man is for every child a decisive epoch, a white and brilliant pillar which people regard as a sort of milestone; and upon our Anschel the day had broken with all its joys and emotions.

It was Saturday. Anschel, according to custom, had to read before the assembled community in a loud and clear voice the chapter in the Thora* appointed for that week. This is not such an easy task as might be imagined; and more than one professor deeply versed in Hebrew grammar would exude blood and water before accomplishing it. In the first place the Thora is not punctuated; and in the next the reader in pronouncing the words must perform a kind of tune which has its rules and its notes exactly determined, and at the end of which two knocks must be given with a stone. Errors are very easily committed, especially in presence of a congregation which punishes every fault more severely than a theatrical audience would punish a false note escaped from a vocalist; while in addition to all this the listening faithful have open in their pews before them Bibles duly punctuated and accentuated which enable them to perceive at once the least mistake made.

* Pentateuch.

The consequence is that there are enough whispers and rectifications to drive a man to distraction.

As for Anschel, however, he did not feel the slightest apprehension; he was so sure in all matters that even while asleep he would have carried out a design to perfection. When the officiating minister called upon him to mount the stand behind the Thora he advanced with a heart full of courage. Too short to ascend it he bravely got up on the stool which the foresighted minister had provided. All was going on wonderfully well: a rabbi would not have acquitted himself better. Rebb Isserl, Anschel's father, had several times blown his nose in satisfaction, now and then betraying his emotion. Above, in the seats reserved for women, one of those present had let her head fall on her prayer-book, evidently to hide her tears. This was Anschel's mother. But while Anschel was progressing thus admirably he suddenly glanced under the Thora and saw little Schlome Katz, rather older than himself, who was at that moment receiving from his father a thump in the side for having stared at the gallery where through the rails some charming faces could be seen, instead of listening to the reader. This circumstance produced such a strong impression on Anschel that simultaneously both his mind and his body lost their equilibrium, and he fell

heavily off the stool. The glory of the *bar-mitzveh* vanished immediately.

This incident had a vast influence on the after-life of our friend; it was a milestone inscribed with the name of "Schlemiel." When, troubled and disconcerted, Anschel was retiring, Schlome Katz in a whisper and with a horrible grimace inquired of him, "What ever makes you such a great schlemiel?" As he went along this appellation seemed to become a veritable byword; on all sides his ears were assailed with the question, "What ever makes you such a great schlemiel?"

People often go about branded with a judgment which is not confirmed until years later. The inhabitants of the ghetto had guessed wonderfully the precise nature of our Anschel.

Here the reader may appropriately be made acquainted more fully with Schlome Kätz, a personage who will play an important part in the life of Anschel. Schlome, we must begin by saying, was the latter's personal enemy.

The enmity between them originated with the grandparents of the young men, and rested on a very solid basis; nothing, in fact, less than a house. The dwelling which belonged to Rebb Isserl Gloser, had once been in the possession of the Katz family. Schlome's grandfather was one of those careless, light-hearted men, who prefer

ease to work; and a taste he entertained for gambling soon led to his pretty, two-storied house passing into other hands. It was said in the ghetto that Anschel's grandfather had won it from him, which was untrue; the fact, however, being that he had bought it for next to nothing.

The Katz family could not resign themselves to losing the much-loved house of their birth. The wound inflicted on them smarted and bled incessantly, as though it had been made with infernal stone; particularly on Saturdays, when old Katz, awaking from his after-dinner nap, used to look through the window of his abode at the beloved building just over the way. Then when he had yawned, he would utter a profound sigh and say to his wife:—"My father parted with that house a little too readily, and it ought now to belong to his family, in which case I should not be obliged to pay rent. But formerly men did not, it is true, consider their children in the least; and my poor father, in order to live like a lord on Saturday, would have sold six other houses besides." It will easily be understood that hearing these remarks fifty-two times a year Schlome could scarcely fail to receive them into his soul like so many drops of water which were to end by petrifying. "Schlome," his parents frequently said to him, "when you are a man you

must try to get back that house, for those who are now in it have stolen it from us." And he always, on these occasions, regarded the edifice with a horrible grimace which seemed to say:—"Wait till I am a man, and I will get it back."

The older he became the more deeply did these roots grow in him, until at length they were like a tree with whose branches Schlome could, so to say, at any moment have reached across to the coveted house and lifted it towards him by the hair of its head.

The difference between the natures of the two young men had early shown itself. The son of the proprietor of the house was awkward, clumsy, and timid. On the other hand Schlome was quick and nimble, and never lacked an appropriate word. He soon came to the conclusion that he was at liberty to inflict on Schlemiel all kinds of insults, and that in this way his whole time might well be employed. One trait, moreover, in the characters of men like Schlome, is an inability to endure the awkwardness and clumsiness of others, which they find no less unbearable than short boots. They do not regard defects in their neighbours as punishments from above, but as a sort of merchandise scattered on the highway, with which the first comer can do as he chooses.

Both boys, after their *bar-mitzveh*, had been

placed in business. Schlome at once set to work with great intelligence, and was soon up to all the artifices and tricks which his calling required. In a very short time he could hold and show an old piece of cloth so as to make it pass for new, exhibit admirably a torn silken ribbon so as to conceal its defects, and treat a sample of printed calico of an antiquated pattern in such a way that it would seem to be of the latest fashion. He amused those who observed him when, sometimes seated upon, at others standing in front of his stall, he cried across the market place "*Lazinj, lazinj, kupté!*" (come and buy, cheap, cheap), in a manner which drew purchasers in shoals. Then he would pinch the plump cheeks of some rustic lass, shake the brawny hand of a countryman, while of a mother he would, with tender solicitude, inquire after her husband, Pan Waczlaw, or her little Honza. The fact that he was only just aware of the existence of the two last-named persons mattered nothing. In acting thus, Schlome generally attained a double object; his customers willingly paid a trifle more to him than they would have done to another, and people said in speaking of him:—"Ah, that young Schlome is a clever boy; he will make a great man."

How little did Anschel resemble him in business matters! His *lazinj* sounded in the market

so sad and so unpersuasive that no one was at all surprised that he failed to attract anybody. Yet it could not be said that he lacked goodwill in business, for, on the contrary, he possessed this quality in excess. As in the case, however, of so many men of his nature, Anschel's goodwill went on such high stilts that it was ever falling to the ground. When he tried to imitate Schlome in pinching the cheeks of fair buyers, he performed the operation so violently as to leave a red mark on the delicate flesh, or, going to the other extreme, did it so lightly that the squeeze was not even felt. Schlome in all his transactions observed certain rules, and everything he did reflected credit upon him, in the eyes of the public, as a sensible man; whereas Anschel nearly always made himself ridiculous. Now he was too forward in displaying goods, now too behindhand.

"He is a schlemiel," Rebb Isserl would exclaim sadly; and the boy's mother replied nothing, inwardly hoping, though, that he would alter in time.

As he did not alter, Rebb Isserl said later on to his spouse—

"I wonder where I got this schlemiel?" and still she kept silence.

Several years after, old Isserl, who was taciturn as a rule, broke out with these words—

"I fully expect that he will end by letting this house slip away into other hands; he is such a perfect schlemiel."

To say that the mother on this occasion held her peace would be insufficient, for she was already dead—and to-day, as the reader knows, another death has occurred in the street. Anschel is still the schlemiel of former years.

Not a soul in the ghetto could understand why Anschel made such strange gestures of despair when on the morrow the corpse was lowered into the grave. He trembled all over so violently that when the beadle approached him to make, according to custom, a slit in his coat as a sign of mourning, the penknife cut his hand, and blood began to flow profusely.

Seeing him agitated as we have described, those of the bystanders who were in the habit of judging only from what they saw, asked of one another, "But why should he go on like this—isn't he a man now?" It is impossible always to tell people everything.

There are moments when natures as fatally unfortunate as Anschel's at last grow conscious of their misery. The fact was that he had just realized the extent of his loss in the death of his father. Before him he saw his whole past, full of mistakes and blunders; never had his unlucky

star cast upon him such sinister rays. It seemed to him as though the time had come for him to rank as a veritable schlemiel, and that his hopes were about to be interred with the dead. Suddenly, on raising his eyes, he perceived by his side Schlome Katz, who, with terrible activity, was throwing shovelful after shovelful of earth on the coffin; no one in this work could have competed with him. A gloomy reminiscence of his childhood flashed across Anschel's brain. He saw himself once more with the Thora before him, reading the chapter for the week; then the stool on which he stood fell, and he next heard the malignant voice of Schlome inquiring, "What makes you such a great schlemiel?" All this explains his strange trembling when the beadle was making an incision in his coat; it seemed to him as though the knife were held by Schlome Katz in person.

We regret our inability to present to the reader more than a few detached leaves from the life of Anschel.

We shall only speak, then, of what relates to him in his character of schlemiel. As such, a fair sketch of him will not take us long.

During the *schiewe** Anschel reflected gravely how to transform himself into another man. A thousand different plans occurred to him; but one

* The seven days consecrated to mourning the dead.

alone he seriously entertained. This was to marry.

In the ghetto it is not difficult to find a wife.

Already he had attracted the attention of the schadschan,* Rebb Hasch, who, while his father was yet alive, had cast his eyes on Anschel. One day he called on the young man, and, in a very animated conversation, proposed an excellent partner. Anschel was not long making up his mind; and it was arranged that during the approaching cholemoëd† he and the agent should go together to Kollin and see her. For the rest, the matter was kept so secret that no one had the least suspicion of Anschel's projects. The cholemoëd arrived, and he found himself among the number of those on the way to a matrimonial interview to try their luck in getting a wife. Outside the town, where the avenues commence, stood a little one-horse vehicle which was to take our friend to the blessed land of his future wife. Rebb Hasch, the schadschan, had been awaiting him some time; for Anschel wished nobody to know whom he was going with, nor where he was going.

The two started on their journey. Anschel sat in the conveyance without saying a word; in his

* A matrimonial agent. His is one of the professions of the ghetto.

† A sort of *fête* between Easter and Pentecost.

mind he saw ascend as on a new Jacob's ladder the charming image of his still unknown bride. He did nothing more than go into her presence; and already he felt an altogether different man. Meanwhile his companion Rebb Hasch brought out his phylacteries and began to pray. Anschel had said his prayers at home, preferring to spend the time on the road in reflection. Suddenly, just as they were approaching an inn by the wayside, the schadschan uttered a cry.

"What is it?" asked Anschel.

"On my life," he said, "there is Schlome Katz."

"And what then?" inquired Anschel.

The schadschan shook his head; he evidently objected to meeting Schlome Katz, on this particular day at least.

Before the inn, which they soon reached, was a carriage drawn by two horses which had been watered. At the door stood Schlome Katz, whom the sharp eyes of Rebb Hasch had espied some distance off. He was filling a silver-mounted pipe, and during the operation, displayed a number of brilliant rings on his fingers.

"Curse it," exclaimed the schadschan, "he is also going to have an interview."

"Heaven preserve you," cried Schlome as they passed before him; "where are you going, Anschel?"

Anschel blushed red as a cherry upon seeing that his plans were divined.

"Good luck," added Schlome with a laugh; "now don't be a schlemiel!"

For some time after they had passed the inn, Rebb Hasch repeatedly looked behind him; and the expression of his face betrayed uneasiness. Anschel did not understand his anxiety, and asked—

"What ever makes you look back in that way?"

"I am afraid," answered Rebb Hasch, "lest Schlome Katz should follow at our heels; he has taken up too favourable a position. Depend upon it he also is going to have an interview."

Thereupon he ordered the driver to go faster; and it was not till he found himself three leagues ahead of his dangerous enemy that the schadschan's peace of mind was restored. The reason was intelligible enough; he felt concern for the fair one they were about to visit. At noon the carriage reached its destination. Anschel was highly satisfied with the effect that his arrival produced in the street. The fact was, however, that people could not help seeing from his face that he was going to a matrimonial interview.

While Rebb Hasch in his quality of ambassador was announcing him to his future parents-in-law, Anschel remained in a Jewish tavern. There he had to submit to a severe interrogation on the

part of the hostess as to whence he had come, whither he was going, what was his object and so on. But Anschel was reserved, and did not let the least word escape which could betray him. Soon the schadschan rejoined him and whispered in his ear that all was ready for his reception; upon which they went out together.

As they walked towards the house Rebb Hasch gave him excellent advice as to the way in which he should behave in the presence of his intended. He was not to eat too much, but was to make a point of talking a great deal, so that he might appear to be not a gourmand but an agreeable conversationist. He was to show himself very observant, as his sweetheart had been well brought up, spoke French, and had read widely. These last details made Anschel feel rather uncomfortable; but he plucked up all the courage he could, and entered the house. Just, however, as he was going upstairs he met, coming downstairs, Schlome Katz! He must have got there by a miracle! Anschel shuddered all over upon recognising him; while as for Schlome, he smiled amicably and wished the other good luck. Anschel remained on the staircase uncertain how to act.

"Supposing he has anticipated me!" he thought. Still he could not believe that this was the case; and anyhow he was a better chance than Schlome.

"She will give me the preference," he said to himself, and then with heroic courage he opened the door.

He found the family quite ready to receive him. The father of the girl came forward with a friendly air, and the mother, a tall woman, with somewhat imperious eyes, saluted him in German. After he had been asked to sit down some refreshments were offered him by his hostess. Anschel had now to answer questions put by the father concerning his family and his fortune. To these inquiries, however, he only half replied, so preoccupied was he with a desire to know if the real object of his visit was pretty. Shortly afterwards the mother, who had left the room, returned with her daughter. The latter held in her hand a plate containing pastry and bon-bons, which she tendered to Anschel. But the young man let it drop as he gazed fixedly at the black eyes of the maiden; and he was so dazzled and fascinated that he continued gazing long after plate, pastry, and bon-bons had fallen from his hand to the floor. The girl giggled, the mother pouted, and the father smilingly observed everything.

At table Anschel was placed by the side of the daughter. But the incident which had just occurred had made him gloomy; and he sat perfectly silent when he ought to have been charming

his fair neighbour with sparkling wit. Instead of eating but little, he devoured all before him without even observing the pauses required by *derech eretz*.* The others regarded him with eyes which said a great deal; and though Anschel was conscious of this his unlucky star steadily caused him more and more confusion. He did nothing and said nothing which was not quite contrary to the advice given him by the schadschan. Suddenly he heard the mistress of the house say in an undertone to the father of the maiden, "He is really a great schlemiel." His blood curdled in his veins; fear seized him, and, once having fallen into this state of mind, his ill luck again asserted itself.

After getting up from the table he remained alone with his intended. The father and mother left the young couple, and it was now that the interview properly so called began. Anschel's fear was boundless when he found himself face to face with her, to whom in the future he would probably have a good deal to say, though now he was utterly at a loss for words. The maiden seemed to be waiting for him to begin the conversation. Drops of perspiration stood on Anschel's forehead. Suddenly a light shone in upon him, and he meditated as to how at such a moment Schlome Katz would

* Literally the way of the country; that is, etiquette.

behave. Schlome, he thought, would without doubt take the maiden's hand softly in his, and then squeeze it tenderly, accompanying the movement with a graceful phrase; and the result of this reflection was that Anschél wished to do and actually did the same. But meanwhile he had got so near her that suddenly she uttered an involuntary cry.

"My corns! my corns!" she said, springing up, and hopping about the room with loud lamentations.

"You have corns?" asked the terrified Anschel. "I was not aware of that."

Half laughing, half crying, the maiden continued to hop about.

"There can be no doubt," she exclaimed, "that your neighbour Katz was right when he told us that"—

"What did he tell you?" inquired Anschel.

"That you were a schlemiel," she replied.

Anschel did not want to hear another syllable; what more could be said to him? The word "schlemiel" was now imprinted on the lips of his beloved. Before asking himself what he was going to do he was outside the door and had closed it after him. He was going downstairs four steps at a time when he suddenly found himself once more face to face with Schlome Katz.

"Well," said the latter, laughing, "may I congratulate you?"

"Blackguard!" muttered Anschel, escaping in all haste.

His distress was at first so great that he felt undecided whether he should return home to suffer a trial beyond his strength; for what would he be able to say when people had heard about this interview which covered him with confusion? Moreover, Schlome Katz would not hesitate to proclaim his misfortune. The idea of returning filled him with dismay: he wished to fly. So in this state of mind he ran out of the town, while Rebb Hasch sought him on all sides. The schadschan was quite as inconsolable as Anschel; he thought of his agency fees.

It was not till late at night that Anschel re-entered the town, intending to go to the tavern, get his conveyance ready, and go home. To do this he had, some time before reaching the tavern, to pass the house of his ex-intended. Lights shone brilliantly from the windows, and sounds of joyful laughter reached his ears.

"They are making fun of you," he said to himself; "Schlome Katz is sitting at her side and saying, whenever he speaks of you, 'he is a schlemiel, he is a schlemiel.'"

And with a sense of shame he stooped down to get by.

Turning the angle of the street whence the tavern was but a few paces distant, Anschel came to a little house. A light was still burning in it.

"Perhaps," he reflected, "there is a maiden here;" and urged by an irresistible impulse he approached the window.

First he merely stood close to the wall; then, feeling more courageous, he boldly looked through the window into the room. He saw an old man sitting at a table with a book before him—doubtless a gemara*—in which he seemed absorbed. The lamp stood near him, and the rest of the room was in obscurity. All at once Anschel heard the sound of a voice proceeding from one part of the room.

"Father," it said, "Fischele will not say his evening prayers."

Anschel strained his eyes to see who had just spoken, for the voice had gone right to his heart.

Fortunately for Anschel the old man took up the lamp.

"Wait a moment, Fischele," he said, "I am coming;" and as he moved along with the lamp in his hand it threw a better light around, and

* A Talmudic book.

Anschel saw a young woman sitting by the cot of a little boy.

At the father's approach the child became obedient, and the maiden went on with her task of making him say his prayers. She pronounced the words in a firm voice, and the boy repeated them after her. When she came to the passage, "On my right is the angel Michael, on my left the angel Gabriel," &c., Anschel, who had listened breathlessly, could not understand why this evening prayer produced to-day such an unusual effect upon him. It seemed to him as though he himself had never uttered it otherwise than mechanically and incompletely, and that he now heard it offered properly for the first time. Suddenly the child cried out—

"Some one is looking in at the window," and immediately hid himself under the bedclothes.

Anschel would have fled, but he lacked the courage. A voice like that of the maiden seemed to say, "Remain." He distinctly heard the street door open, and the young woman call to him. Instead of replying in words Anschel followed her indoors, and before he had had time to recover from his surprise, found himself in the room.

In a very short time he became as much at home and easy there as if he had lived in the place for years. The father was the sacrificing priest for

the community; that is to say, he killed beasts and fowls in the manner prescribed by the Mosaic laws. His daughter's name was Esther. She was a good, pious girl, and Anschel could not take his eyes off her.

One thought wholly possessed him. "Supposing you get engaged to her," he said to himself. "You cannot return without a wife; and in becoming allied to her, you would at the same time be doing a good action. She would love you, and the idea of calling you 'schlemiel' would never enter her head."

He lost no time, but at once solicited Esther's hand. Both father and daughter looked very surprised at the request. Anschel then confined himself to telling them his name, and their surprise turned into joy.

When he asked Esther whether she would consent to marry him, she blushed to the white of her eyes, and answered in a low voice—

"I find you to my liking."

Fischele, who had heard everything, now precipitately leaped out of bed, crying—

"Let me go and find our relations and our friends; Esther is engaged."

"It will be time enough to-morrow," observed Esther.

"Let him alone," implored the happy Anschel;

"let the marriage *tenoum** be drawn up at once."

In presence of a family assembly convoked by Fischele, and which met there that very night, Anschel was declared to be Esther's future husband. As to conditions, there were none; the sacrificing priest of the community was poor and consequently could give his daughter no dowry whatever.

Is not this a fine piece of romantic heroism in the life of our Anschel? But what will the ghetto say? Already I hear bursts of sardonic laughter and see arrows of raillery flying.

A year afterwards Anschel took Esther to his home; she had now become his wife. The marriage had been celebrated in the most joyful manner; and now the young woman was for the first time since the ceremony to be taken to the synagogue.

Two women in their best clothes were on their way there.

"Have you seen Schlemiel's wife yet?" asked one.

"No," returned the other. "How is Fradel, the dressmaker?"

"Schlemiel's wife is all that the wife of a schlemiel ought to be. The keg never loses the smell of the herrings."

* Contract.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that she has a hump back which would do to build a house on."

"My opinion is that he might have found as good a woman here without going outside to make his choice. And to say that he did not receive a single florin with her!"

"But he did not indeed, and he had to give her the very dress and chemise in which she is now clad, not to mention her gold chain, which he bought of Hirsch the jeweller for one hundred florins."

"A schlemiel will remain a schlemiel; nothing can alter him."

Sounds of joyful music suddenly interrupted the conversation of the two gossips. Immediately afterwards a long file of married men dressed in *fête* costume could be seen turning the corner of the street which led to the synagogue. To-day Anschel was for the first time going to the temple in his character of *balbos*.* He advanced, his face shining with joy, between two friends who had similarly accompanied him on his marriage day and conducted him to the nuptial dais. And if at this moment some one had asked him who was the happiest man in the land, he could easily have replied.

* Master of a house.

Behind him came his wife of two days' standing amid a crowd of young and aged women, who considered it a duty to go with the new-comer on the occasion of her first visit to the synagogue. The music consisted of the liveliest airs, and as the procession passed along windows were opened, and people said, gazing with curiosity—

"Look here; we can now see what kind of a woman Schlemiel's wife is."

When the synagogue was reached, the music ceased, and the young couple entered, followed by the *cortége*. Anschel, until he got to his place, was greeted incessantly with the words, "*Masel Tof.*" Before commencing to chant the chapter for the week, the reader called Anschel to where the Thora was, accompanying the appeal with a solemn tune. Happy moment!

Meanwhile, according to an old custom which no one was permitted to violate, Esther, in the part of the synagogue reserved for women, distributed Corinth grapes and sweetmeats. The ghetto was to her a foreign, unknown land, and yet she was required to conform to every law of *derech eretz.** Amid the laughing and prattle on every side she committed more than one fault, which were severely blamed.

"No manners whatever," observed the stout

* Etiquette.

wife of the governor of the community, as she scornfully curled her upper lip.

It must be mentioned that Esther had, in innocence, offered the plate of bon-bons to another woman before doing so to her.

"My dear Gitel," remarked her neighbour, who found herself in the same case, "do you think people learn manners amidst geese and fowls. At home she has done nothing but wait for people to send her father birds to slaughter. How could you expect her to know manners?"

"She used to scrub the floor, too."

"Yes, my dear Gitel," added the neighbour with bursts of laughter, "and don't you observe that she still bears traces of that employment?"

These words were pronounced too loudly for the young wife not to hear them. Nothing hurts our sensibility so much as to find ourselves in an extraordinary position. Then all our senses are, so to say, on the watch, and our soul exercises activity in a thousand different directions. Oddly enough, Esther suffered less from being reproached with her birth and deficiency in manners than from hearing herself credited with a defect which she really did not possess; for apart from an imperceptible inequality in the left shoulder, which the piercing eyes of a woman alone could have dis-

covered, she had no deformity whatever. From shame she quite lost her equanimity, and it was with eyes bewildered that she traversed the thick troop of women who pressed to her side to wish her welcome. During this time, when double service was required from all her faculties, she transgressed *derech eretz* again and again.

In our synagogues there are neither the strains of organs, nor sackbuts, nor incense, to subdue, stupify and relieve the mind, so as to make it forget its afflictions. There, if a tear falls from any eye everybody notices it.

Esther shed tears of anxiety and embarrassment. Amid all the whispering, laughter, and prattle, she imagined herself being pointed out as an abominable misshapen thing, and she at length even believed that she was so.

The ceremonies came to an end. Anschel returned with his wife. The music preceded them with its joyous sounds. Esther was sad and deeply distressed. Anschel asked her what was the matter, and, as he insisted upon knowing, she replied, with sobs:—

"Ah! if you had only heard what they said."

"Hold!" he exclaimed, with a profound sigh; "I would rather you were silent on that subject."

Neither said another word; Esther from female vanity, no doubt, Anschel because he was loath

to hear pronounced the sombre formula of his ill luck from which there was no escape.

Is it not a melancholy thing to see all the efforts, all the good resolutions of a man brought to nought by the omnipotency of his fate? Frequently people fight against their bad fortune with lance and club, the field of battle is covered with torrents of blood, and at last when they think the strife is over, they find that old serpent, their fate, still before them. This fate is truly undying.

Long years passed without our friend's making the least progress in public opinion; on the contrary, he continually fell back.

No one wanted to have anything to do with him. Does not the malediction of his Maker, evidently to the eyes of all his fellows, rest upon a schlemiel? If he has money he turns it into lead; if a good idea strikes him it leads to disaster; if he thinks he has an advantage certainly before him it escapes. Who then could desire to enter into relations with him? Who could wish to fasten the vessel of his existence to the wreck of a storm-beaten ship, immutably devoted to destruction?

In everything Anschel could perceive the aversion with which he was regarded. He could never give anybody satisfaction. On Sunday, when every one else was at business, and Anschel was seen quietly standing in the street, people said:—

"Why is he there, when he might be making money?" If, on the other hand, he preceded the rest, they remarked, "What ardour! One would fancy he thought business was going to run away."

Frequently he returned from his rounds as early as Thursday, impatient as he was to see his wife and children once more. "Why does he go home on Thursday?" folks then asked. If, to please his neighbours, he did not return till late on Friday, when already lights were shining in honour of the Sabbath, they upbraided him saying:—"He is not only a schlemiel but also a *Posche-Israel*.* Thus on all sides Anschel was overwhelmed with reproach, on all sides avoided. As he could never content people, he ended by doing nothing at all—and therein lay his misfortune.

It would be difficult to say precisely where this misfortune began and where it ended. In a very short time the heritage left by Rebb Isserl had disappeared Anschel knew not how. He had long been aware of Schlome's projects, for the latter had told all who cared to listen that he had ordered workmen to whitewash *his* house, and that he only awaited the *opportune moment*. This news had been charitably borne in all haste to Anschel, whose informants moreover had mentioned a few other designs against him which fell like so many

* A bad Jew.

drops of boiling water into his soul. All he could do was to redouble his efforts, but in vain: for Schlome Katz was always at his heels like an evil genius. If Anschel was building his hopes on some speculation, he might know for certain that Schlome would hear of it and anticipate him. If Anschel was going at five o'clock to do a stroke of business somewhere, he would find that Schlome had been there at three. Thousands of demons seemed to note his most secret thoughts in order to convey them to Schlome. Meanwhile the latter had married the beautiful maiden who would be slow to forget her first interview with Anschel. She had without hesitation been given to Schlome, notwithstanding he possessed nothing, and because he had been found a clever young man who knew how to get on in this world. The prophecy uttered by the inhabitants of the ghetto was fulfilled. Schlome had made his way.

Now and then on Fridays, as they were both returning home, Anschel and Schlome met together at the entrance to the ghetto.

"Business been good?" Schlome habitually inquired, slapping his pouch which was full of money, and fastened by a leather band round his waist.

"I am tired out. But no matter, you will not have the house; your efforts are vain."

But, alas! to what purpose does one heroically defend oneself against a far superior power? When misfortune is oppressing a man it shows neither generosity nor humanity, and attacks him before and behind.

Anschel now at length perceived that *alone* he was unable to do anything in business, and he thought of getting a partner. But this idea was of little value, for he could find no one desirous of associating with him. Anschel entreated, implored; he addressed unfeeling persons, and obtained nothing but unkind observations in return. Finally, however, after searching everywhere, he came upon an ally who was willing to give the matter a trial. The ally would be put to little risk, for Anschel was to furnish all the capital, and the profits were to be shared equally. In spite of the terms, Anschel was in ecstasy at his eventual discovery of a partner.

For a time all went well. At the end of the first six months the partner took his proportion of the gains, while Anschel allowed his own to remain with the capital. Now times were hard, now they brightened a little. But the result was always the same; gold turned into copper, and copper into bad lead. When Anschel and his partner made up accounts at the end of the year, they found that their losses were very considerable.

The partner on this occasion got so angry that, striking the table with his clenched fist, he repeatedly called the other a schlemiel. He attributed to Anschel all the bad luck of the enterprise, regretting one thing only—his ever having *placed confidence* in him; then he rose and went out in a fury.

The next Saturday Esther went to the synagogue without her gold chain round her neck.

"What has she done with her chain?" whispered Fradel, the dressmaker, in the ear of a neighbour.

"Pledged it at Hirsch, the jeweller's."

"Already?"

"What else was to be expected when she had such a schlemiel for her husband?"

Meanwhile Schlome Katz seemed to be eagerly awaiting the *opportune moment* to make sure about getting *his* house. He was often heard to say:—"If he is not willing to assist my designs, force will be used; but let things take their course, and I tell you beforehand that Anschel Gloser will come to me and himself propose the house—wait till to-morrow and see."

Wonderful to relate, from the moment it became known that Anschel was a ruined man he rose somewhat in public opinion. An inner voice told people that upon him was impressed the seal of

misfortune, and that to persecute him any longer would be a crime, a deadly sin.

They sought therefore to aid and counsel him. It was rather too hard, however, on their part to advise him to sell his house, adding that purchasers would be sure to come forward. Anschel's soul, like a wounded charger, reared against this last proposition; he grew enraged when it was mentioned. "I see," he then exclaimed, "that Schlome Katz has sent you. I regard any one who gives me such advice as my greatest enemy. I will become a *schulklopfer*, a *thillim*,* rather than let my house fall into Schlome Katz's hands." Henceforth Anschel attached an inestimable value to the dwelling. In his eyes there was not enough money in the world to buy it. He clung to it like a shipwrecked man to the remains of his vessel. As for Esther, she complained but little; she suffered and wept in silence. "If he had not married me," she thought, "he would have prospered; I alone have been the cause of all his misery."

The term which Schlome Katz had fixed in his mind for Anschel's continued possession was soon to expire. Misfortune, we all know, is very swift.

One day when out on a round, Anschel remembered that it was the anniversary of the day on

* In every community there are certain poor persons who, for a consideration, say prayers at the synagogue on behalf of people who are sick or in danger.

which he had been led with Esther to the nuptial dais. His heart expanded with soft joy. He saw himself once more at the window of the house in which he first beheld Esther. Of the evening prayer which Esther had made her little brother say, he heard the words:

"On my right is the angel Michael, on my left Gabriel, before me Raphael, behind me Uriel; above me is the majesty of God."

Under the influence of these soothing thoughts he felt awhile happy for the first time during many a long year. In this state he went along as though, at least according to his own view, he had defeated his own luck. He met a peasant carrying a goose to market. This he bought for a piece of cloth, intending to roast it for the approaching Sabbath. The cloth given in exchange was worth certainly three times as much as the bird; but Anschel considered all the same that he had made a good bargain. He walked nine miles with his feathered burden under his arm; and he was so joyous and beaming that those who met him could not help thinking he bore with him a priceless treasure. He stopped some hours at the inn situated by the entrance to the town; for it was daylight, and he could scarcely, except in darkness, go through the ghetto with his live dinner. He waited for the arrival of night.

"Oh, look, what has father brought?" cried little Schimmele, when Anschel got home with his burden, which he had prudently concealed under his great coat. He let it fall to the ground.

"A goose, a goose!" Schimmele gleefully shouted, as he clapped his hands. Esther smiled.

"Now see, Esther," said Anschel, "if this goose does not bring us good luck. It is exactly ten years ago to-day that we were led to the *chuppe*.* Let us have a good Saturday with this bird; it will do us no harm to be happy once more for an hour or two."

He spoke these words with such great confidence in the future that one might have thought he had a written and sealed promise that his luck should change favourably.

Although it was only Wednesday, Anschel remained at home, setting business aside for the while. He wished to sanctify himself, as it were, for the coming *fête* day, as our ancestors used to do at the foot of Sinai.

Saturday had arrived. Anschel was sitting at the table, surrounded by the numerous little members of his family. Esther's features were covered with a transparent blush—a delicate gauze with shining joy beneath it. It was easy to see that she placed hopes in her husband.

* Nuptial dais.

When the washing of hands had taken place and Anschel had blessed the white Sabbath-bread, the happiness of the family commenced.

"To-day my children," said the father, "you may eat and drink whatever you like; it is ten years ago to-day that your mother and I, after our *Chassen* * were for the first time led in procession to the synagogue."

"Was I there too?" asked little Schimmele.

Esther coloured; but Anschel growing happier every moment replied—

"No Schimmele, you were not there; but, to indemnify you, I have taken from the marriage repast and put aside for you a great slice of goose."

Schimmele could not have been more delighted at the attention shown him by his father; and Anschel intoxicated with joy, thought—

"Can Schlome Katz, though he is Schlome Katz, know the bliss of such a *schabbes?* To do so he would require children."

At length the goose was served up. It was excellently roasted, and so to speak, shone in the dish, imparting pleasure around. Anschel wanted to carve it himself, and took the carving-knife. Then he tucked up his shirt sleeves so as not to splash them, and with great solemnity began his important task.

* Marriage.

We must not attempt to depict his features during the operation. Apart from a very visible preoccupation in his work, it may be said that they were transfigured.

The bird, after the carving had been done, was still before Anschel, when young Schimmele exclaimed—

"Look here, there is a little nail buried in the goose."

"Where?" asked Anschel and Esther both at once.

The child pointed out the place; a small nail was really in the flesh.

Anschel, as though paralysed, dropped his knife; he turned paler than the table cloth. Esther immediately took up the dish containing the goose, and told Schimmele to hasten with it to the Rabbi, and ask him if it was not *trefe*.* The child took the dish, enveloped it in a napkin, and went off quickly to the Rabbi.

Meanwhile a melancholy silence reigned in the room. Anschel kept his eyes cast down, and Esther looked before her without saying a word. Misfortune seemed to hover in the room.

* *Trefe* means what is impure. The Talmud contains a great number of regulations on this subject. Internal wounds in creatures which it is permitted to eat make them impure. Only a Rabbi, or one specially qualified can decide whether a thing is *trefe* or *koscher*. This right of decision is called *paskenen*.

In a few minutes Schimmele returned; his visage gave little hope—tears stood in his eyes.

"Well," said Esther.

"The goose is *trefe*," replied the boy sobbing.

"Anschel," said Esther calmly, in a low voice, looking down with one finger resting on her lips, "Anschel, you are truly a great schlemiel."

Thus she too had pronounced the fatal word! His whole future was now hopeless. What fresh blow could make his heart bleed after that just dealt by the one who ought to have spared him?

"I shall not survive this last wound," he said to himself with composure, and then rose and put on his overcoat. He went forth without saying a word of adieu. It was late at night when he came back. Esther had been waiting for him in the greatest anxiety and fear. Weeping, she threw her arms around him as soon as he entered.

"Ah!" he said, freeing himself from her caresses; "you can never recall those words. I see I am a schlemiel. I have just come from Schlome Katz's; I have sold the house to him."

Schlome Katz has long lived in the abode of his ancestors or rather of our Anschel. He has had it painted white again, and it looks like a new house. Nearly all day he looks out of the window enveloped in a good warm dressing-gown, smoking a silver-mounted pipe, exactly as he had predicted.

There is but one day in the year when Schlome Katz is an altogether different man; this is the *Kippur* day.* Throughout this day he never leaves the synagogue, praying and mortifying himself continually; and when the chanter comes to the passage, "What shall save us in the anguish of death?" to which the faithful reply, "Prayer, righteousness, and repentance," then he may be heard sobbing loudly, and violently striking his breast as a sign of contrition.

As he has no children, he takes care of Anschel's orphans and his widow.

The very day of selling the house, Anschel went from home; he did not return. Several weeks afterwards some peasants in the vicinity brought back his dead body, which they had found in a field, washed up by the river. It was believed that a misfortune had happened to him.

His burial took place. One of the grave-diggers slipped on the heap of humid earth just thrown up, and at the same time let go the corpse, which he held by the feet. It rolled precipitately into the grave. Schlome Katz, who was present, said—

"May he pardon me; but he is a schlemiel even now!"

This was the last stone cast at the unfortunate man.

* Day of reconciliation.

OLD BABELE.

OLD BABELE.

A noisy troop of urchins on their way from school were pursuing across the Schlossberg of Presburg a crazy old woman. It was truly pitiable to see the woman with disordered attire dragging herself along to get away from her inexorable persecutors. A large packet which she held in her hands fell to the ground as, in the course of her flight, she chastised them. Beneath her dirty bonnet hung tresses of grey hair, and from her pale lips came frequent maledictions.

"Hendel, where is your child?" cried the children. "What have you done with your child, Hendel?"

And every time the inquiry was made by the merry little band a most visible change took place in the countenance of the idiot. Her face was then as it were swept by a hurricane which dispersed the clouds of imbecility; and reason seemed to return tranquil and triumphant, like a quarter of the moon long obscured.

The urchins had driven the old woman across the entire slope of the Schlossberg. Not one pious

soul had intervened to reproach them with their bad behaviour. When they are never interfered with, men learn to hate and to persecute. The children had chased their victim to the Palffy garden, at the spot where its green gates open into the street of the Jews. As always happens there was one strong-minded boy among them, whom unconsciously they all obeyed, carrying out whatever orders he chose to give them in virtue of his omnipotence, whether usurped or sanctioned. He was called dark Maierl, from his complexion, the colour of which differed little from that of the negro skins which, out of simple love for historical souvenirs, are still exhibited in some American markets. If at this moment any one had seen dark Maierl with flushed cheeks running after the poor mad woman, and exciting by his sallies endless laughter from his companions, that person's heart would certainly have bled under the impression of a sad presentiment. He would have felt inclined to stop the boy, and say—

"Why are you persecuting that old woman? Wait till the furrows of disillusion have roughened your brow, and the vitriol of the world has burnt your lips, and then, if you dare, you may persecute madness wherever you meet with it."

But no one came forward to speak to him thus, and dark Maierl continued to cry and rejoice in

such a way that by himself, without the aid of trumpets and tymbals, he could have brought down the walls of Jericho. Ah! if black Maierl had been there at the time!

Near the green gates of the Palffy garden stood generally a heap of stones to fill up the hollows made in the street during the bad weather. It was on this heap that the terrible boy proposed to push the crazy Hendel, so that her fall might furnish a fresh occasion for laughter and pleasantry.

But matters went in a very different direction from that which Maierl had hoped. Just when, supported by his enthusiastic companions, he was shouting louder than ever, "Hendel, where is your child?" it seemed as though her soul had become relieved of an enormous weight which it had borne for many years. Over her features something had spread which resembled neither madness nor sanity. Urged by a kind of instinct of revenge, quite animal in its nature, she moved to the heap of stones, and seizing one, threw it as she turned towards her persecutors. The stone, as if endowed with will and great force and charmed by the woman's imprecations, sped through the air until it struck dark Maierl on the temple. He fell immediately.

The sight of blood causes reflection. Seeing

dark Maierl stretched out on the ground with his temple cut open, and blood pouring from the wound, the other boys ceased their cries. They stood mutely round their disabled chief. They had at once lost all desire to continue their fine proceedings.

The mad woman escaped. People ran to the scene from their houses and shops, the men forming a group about the boy. His cheeks were no longer dark as before, but deadly pale, like cloth beginning to bleach. Many of the new-comers were consequently unable to recognise him; beneath the blood streaming down his cheeks and neck they found it difficult indeed to distinguish dark Maierl, who was nevertheless so well known. There now came up a little woman who was very old and who must have seen the trees in the Palffy garden bud at least eighty times.

Addressing one of the bystanders, a gross, fat man, known as Schmoul the innkeeper, she said—

"What is the matter, Schmoul? Why all these people in a ring?"

"A little boy is lying there," replied Schmoul, "bathed in his own blood. Hendel the mad woman has wounded him with a stone."

The little woman no sooner set her eyes on the bleeding child than she recognised him. She uttered a cry of terror and, wringing her

hands above her bonnet of faded gilt spangles, exclaimed in a voice of lamentation—

"It is Maierl, my grandson! Maierl, what has happened? What has happened?"

But he was insensible and speechless.

"Maierl! Maierl! get up and come home with me."

But dark Maierl did not stir. His faculties had so completely left him that he did not even hear the voice of his grandmother—a voice which, more than any other human sound, would have been likely to move him.

The little woman lamented and wept in a manner well calculated to soften even the stone which had wounded Maierl, and which still lay beside him.

"Help, good men, help," she said. "Don't you see that he is nearly dead? Have pity on him, or he will lose every drop of his blood."

"That will do him no harm," remarked Schmoul by way of consolation. "But, apart from that, why doesn't he let people alone? There isn't a child who is safe from his hard blows; this will be a lesson to him."

The little woman cast a look full of reproach at the stout speaker. It sufficed to make him sensible of the wrong he had done. At one bound Schmoul the innkeeper entered the circle,

raised the boy from the ground, and took him on his shoulders.

The blood-covered body of the child hung down his back, and as it was carried along left traces of blood behind.

"Is he to be taken to his father's house on the hill?" he inquired of the grandmother.

"No, no," she answered, "take him to mine; it would not do to carry him in this state through the town before everybody."

The fat porter then pantingly ascended the hill. The little woman followed him, striking her hands together, and from the depths of her sad heart heaving frequent sighs. At last they reached a ruined house in which she lived. In this house Schmoul deposited the boy who was deluged with blood.

It was a sad, still, little room in which, thanks to the care and lotions lavished on him by his grandmother, Maierl re-opened his eyes. Outside the window a walnut tree a century old spread out its green branches, filling the apartment with gloom and freshness. In one corner might have been observed a cupboard adorned with cups and glasses. Above it were a number of tablets, on each of which hung a tin plate most carefully wiped and resplendent all over. Opposite, on the wall, enclosed in a frame of black wood,

was a paper on which could be seen the two lions of Judah with the word *Mizrach* in gigantic letters over their heads. Underneath was written an important passage from the Bible which, owing to the height of the paper, could not easily be read. An old-fashioned bed with a little stool by its side, a lamp with seven burners, and a square table, quite as old as the grandmother herself, completed the furniture of the small room. We must yet add, however, a fly brush on the table, and a placid kitten looking with envious eyes at some little pots of milk on the hob.

What a strange sensation of illness and good health combined our terrible boy experienced when, opening his eyes, he found his little grandmother's hands resting upon him! He took her bony fingers for so many fans refreshing his blood, and offered her no resistance whatever.

First of all she undressed him. The good old woman knelt down to take off his boots, and then successively removed his coat, breeches, and waistcoat; after which she prepared to lift him to the bed which had long since been ready to receive him. Each time she had relieved him of a garment she had uttered in an undertone words which sounded in Maierl's ears like delicious music. Now suddenly her visage assumed a sad expression, and she commenced to weep. She had

undressed the boy to his shirt, on which he bore his *arbeh-kanfes*. But alas! in what condition did she find it? The *zigehs** hung from the corners of each pocket untied, and to one pocket they were altogether wanting. At this sight the little grandmother raised her voice in lamentation, and uttered loud cries.

"Oh, the present age!" she exclaimed, "when children are forgetful enough to carry injured *zigehs*. Would I were dead, oh heavens! I should not then behold such things. Maierl, Maierl, you bad boy, what would your Dede† say if he knew it? He would certainly go back to his tomb and weep for his grandson so greatly degenerated! But the *Schem boruch hu*‡ has punished you for becoming such a *Posche-Isroel*,§ and will punish all who are no better than you. Would this accident ever have happened to you, Maierl, if you had not been so wicked? Alas! alas! this world no longer contains children who are true Israelites. They have all gone—all, all."

It was in these terms that the grandmother bewailed, and without doubt her words would on this occasion have borne fruit had the boy heard them; but he had just had a relapse, and was more ill than before. Seeing his condition, the grand-

* Woollen threads.
† Grandfather.
‡ Him whose name be praised.
§ Bad Jew.

mother, who during her sermon had let him sink to the floor, uttered a cry of terror, and seized hold of the child. Thanks to cold water lotions from the basin, dark Maierl very soon recovered his senses. His grandmother now gave over lamentation, and before anything else took in hand the task of getting him on to the bed, which was not done without difficulty. With trembling hands Babele arranged the pillow for him, and then the bedclothes, making him lie so that his feet would keep warm, and covering up his neck and hands.

She then took from the table a bunch of keys, and with one of them opened the little chest. Suddenly she coughed drily, evidently an indication that she had just found the object of her eager search. It was a relic dating from a very ancient epoch—a relic whose ex-possessor had years ago become a prey to worms. It was the *Arbeh-Kanfes* of her deceased husband ; may he rest in peace !

Babele had preserved it as one preserves an odoriferous rose picked in springtime from among other flowers. The leaves are put in a book destined long to remain shut, and which is not reopened till years afterwards, when they still exhale a certain perfume. In this perfume seem to float as in a mist the vanished clouds of the past, which

the hands cannot seize, but which the mind perceives.

For the present, however, Babele had not time for reminiscences. She seemed to have quite forgotten that there lived formerly a certain Langleser, whose *Arbeh-Kanfes* was now lying before her. But this part of the estate of the deceased Langleser was in a sense so thoroughly identified with its ancient possessor, that from a single glance at the object, and without any other information, one might have formed an accurate idea of the great figure of him to whom it once belonged. Langleser's *Arbeh-Kanfes* differed little in length from the celebrated bed of His Majesty King Og of Bashan, which, if I remember aright, was forty ells long. Out of this *Arbeh-Kanfes* dark Maierl could certainly have had made for himself a coat, breeches, waistcoat, and perhaps, in case of need, also a cap. But Babele had no such thoughts. One thing only occupied her mind—how to get this precious amulet on Maierl. She soon succeeded. The urchin was now enveloped in his grandfather's relic as in a warm garment.

But Babele had forgotten one essential detail—remember the eighty springs of the trees in the Palffy garden—which did not leave her memory quite clear. The little boy was lying with his

head uncovered. For some time Babele, in her extreme fright, did not know what to do—where to find a head covering! The child's own cap was impregnated with blood, and could not consequently be used. Greatly perplexed, the little woman went all about the room muttering unintelligibly. Suddenly she seemed transfigured. She had found what she wanted. What do you think it was? Babele's own Saturday bonnet embroidered in gold. She put it on the head of the unresisting Maierl.

The little boy very much resembled one of those kings of old who are said to have slept with their crowns on. The grandfather's immense *Arbeh-Kanfes* served as the royal mantle, the *zigehs* represented decorations of different orders, and the congealed blood all over him some magnificent fleece. This royal costume possessed even a certain historical value, like that of the defunct Charlemagne. Had it not been worn partly by both the grandfather Langleser and Babele, and had they not each in wearing it expected and attained a great age? As for Babele, she would have passed tolerably for an ancient French queen in the act of putting the crown on her grandson's head.

The day drew towards a close; the boy lay in a great fever resulting from his wound, and in

his delirium talked most extravagantly. Now he shouted in a terrible manner the name "Hendel," hiding himself at the same time beneath the clothes as though fearing she would hurl a second stone at him; now he imagined himself a *Kohn*,* and fancied he was in the synagogue chanting the benediction to the faithful who had to repeat the formulas after him; singing, in fact, one of the secular melodies, and at the same time keeping the fingers spread apart exactly as the descendants of the ancient priests do in the synagogue to-day. Then he believed he saw the terrible figure of Hendel, the mad woman, once more appear before him and began to utter wild, inarticulate cries. At intervals the birds could be heard singing their evening songs in the heart of the Palffy garden in front, and the leaves of the old nut tree warbled mysteriously as though calling upon them to approach.

The expression on the little grandmother's face could not have been more touching than at this moment. Now she bathed with cold water the burning forehead of the boy, now she addressed him in the most flattering and tender terms, giving him the sweetest possible names, and comparing him with gold, sugar, and pearls; then, seeing that all this had no effect, took the big *Sidor*† and

* Priest. † Prayer book.

read some psalms aloud. The birds accompanied her with their songs, and the leaves of the nut tree warbled mysteriously.

Suddenly three well-known blows given with a mallet were heard at the front door. It was the signal for the *Mincha** prayer, made by the man charged with the duty of summoning the faithful to the synagogue. The grandmother at once rose and began to pray ardently from the old *Sidor*. While praying she turned towards the *Mizrach*† for even to-day Jerusalem is in that quarter. She bowed down in every sense, and on arriving at that passage of the eighteen benedictions in which the King of heaven is implored to cure the sick her soul seemed in truth freed from all terrestial preoccupation. She prayed with such fervour, both in heart and faith, that one could have believed she beheld the Almighty seated on His judgment-seat, and that she was imploring Him face to face. Meanwhile, strange to say, the fever had abated; the child lay tranquil in his bed.

His grandmother still went on praying. Suddenly the door opened softly, and a pretty girl entered. Babele saluted the new-comer merely with a silent motion of her head, and continued to pray; for else she would have been

* Evening. † East.

mafzic, that is to say, would have allowed profane words to escape from her lips. As for the boy however, directly he perceived the young girl he cried out joyously—

"Is that you, Golde?" and held out his hands to her.

The sister sat on the bed near Maierl and overwhelmed him with kisses and caresses. But all at once the boy seemed to have contracted an aversion to Golde; he drew away from her, and repelled the hand she had placed on his burning brow to calm him.

"Is it true," he said, "that you have left at the door that grand gentleman, the member of the Diet? You would have taken good care not to let him enter? Go and find him again, his conversation is more agreeable than mine."

These biting words made the girl tremble; and now her pulse beat violently. Hastily she put her hand to the child's lips, and said, in a suppliant voice—

"Maierl, Maierl, for the love of heaven be quiet; if you add another word you ruin me."

"Are you not already ruined?" returned the patient with terrible irony.

"Maierl," said the young woman, her cheeks flooded with tears, "be quiet and you shall have some bon-bons."

For some minutes the boy seemed profoundly absorbed; then he replied—

"Oh, yes; the bon-bons which the grand gentleman has given you! Thanks—keep them for yourself; you might give me all the bon-bons in Presburg and I would not touch one of them. Go and find your gentleman; he will get tired of waiting."

From the depths of her heart the sister supplicated Maierl—

"Maierl, my dear, what have I done to you to make you so ill disposed towards me? Was it not I who always brought you your breakfast when father ordered you to fast for playing truant? Have I not always been good to you, and on Saturdays have I not always given you more than your share of fruit? Was it not I, too, who opened the door to let you escape when father wanted to whip you for passing such a bad examination in the Pentateuch? And you treat me thus! Never mind; I will behave to you as you do to me—especially as you seem to desire it."

Babele had just finished her prayer. She bowed low towards the east as she closed the heavy prayer-book—not without having previously impressed a kiss on the last page. She did not seem to have heard a word of the dialogue between the two children.

Was this owing to her deafness or the fervour with which she had prayed? Perhaps both at once.

The girl respectfully approached her and kissed her withered hand; but the little woman did not salute her granddaughter as amicably as usual, but said, on the contrary, in a dry, severe tone—

"What has happened to you, Golde? Is it proper for you to come so late to visit your sick brother?"

"I had a great deal to do, Babe," replied the girl, lowering her eyes and raising her voice as much as possible; "I had a great deal of sewing to do, and there was nobody to mind the house."

"Louder," said Babele, in a tone of authority; "I am not young enough to hear your piping."

"I had a great deal to do," repeated Golde, with a sad effort to make herself heard.

At these words dark Maierl laughed bitterly in his bed, and regarded his sister with a disdainful air as she stood there like a statue of despair; involuntarily she had clasped her hands as if to pray, and kept them stretched towards her pitiless brother.

"And your father; why is he not here?" demanded Babele, continuing.

"He has gone in a carriage to Tyrnau fair," replied Golde.

"And your mother?"

"She has not yet come back from a journey."

"So it was a *fête* day for Golde," added the boy, smiling lightly.

The girl could no longer resist these arrows of raillery. From her eyes escaped a torrent of bitter tears; she sobbed aloud, and then sinking into the large armchair, buried her face in her hands.

"What is the matter, Golde?" inquired the grandmother with solicitude. "Are you ill too?"

"No, grandmother," said the girl, trying to restrain her tears, "no, there is nothing the matter with me; but I am afraid Maierl is getting seriously ill. Shall I go and fetch the doctor?"

"Go, go," said Babele, shaking her head peculiarly; "but why be so eager to fetch the doctor? The doctor is all very well when he is not wanted. As to Maierl, to-morrow morning he will go to the synagogue and say amen to all the prayers as usual. Will you not, Maierl, my angel? And when he feels better I shall give him, I shall give him"—

"A large piece of cake," said Maierl, finishing his grandmother's thought.

"Quite right, my child, a large piece of cake," said the grandmother, with a smile which no words could express. "But, now, if Maierl will promise

me to be fresh and willing to-morrow like a fish in water I will tell him a *maïssele** such as he has certainly never heard before. Would you like that, my child?"

Smilingly the child held out one of his hands to the little grandmother, whom he regarded with a mute expression of deep love. Golde had quickly dried her tears and wheeled to the bedside the old armchair in which Babele had just sat down. The girl herself sat on the side of the bed, doing so that she might not have before her the eyes of Maierl—she was afraid of him.

Babele began—

"The story I am going to tell to you takes us back many years before even there was any question of your Babele's marriage with her Leser. At that time there lived at Presburg in the *Nikolaibergel* † a man renowned throughout Bohemia, Moravia, and Hungary. His name was Rebb Paltiel Wolf. He knew everything. The reason was that he studied night and day; if you happened to pass his house at midnight you could see him bent over his Gemara,‡ which he contemplated without ceasing. He studied so much that in the end he did not know whether he was alive or dead. I do not mean by this—Heaven

* Story. † Name of a quarter.
‡ Part of the Thora.

forbid—that he was not in the enjoyment of his reason; only he had become indifferent to all that went on around him, and looked like a man just from the tomb.

"Rebb Paltiel Wolf was married to a woman who had given him a daughter. One day Rebb Paltiel was seated studying, the Gemara open before him, when he heard groaning and the cries of a child.

"'Esther,' he said, 'what is that noise which is interrupting my studies?'

"'Why Rabbi,' replied Esther, 'it is your child, the child whom I have borne you.'

"It was not till this moment that he knew he had a child.

"Heaven pardon him, the great saint, whose memory be blessed! he forgot he had a child. He was not preoccupied with himself; how could he then be preoccupied with his child? It was wrong of him, for his daughter was a nice girl. She grew up, became beautiful, and in all the *kille** people talked of nothing but Hendel, the daughter of Rebb Paltiel Wolf. The Rabbi alone was ignorant of all this; he seemed to have a bandage on his eyes. He could not see like every one else.

"Soon afterwards he lost his wife Esther. When the next day she did not bring him his breakfast

* Community.

at the ordinary time, he was quite surprised to find the women remaining so late at the synagogue. He thought, indeed, that his wife had remained there to gossip. Suddenly he heard weeping in the room, and seeing that it was Hendel, his daughter, who was in tears, said to her—

"'Why do you weep, my child?'

"'Why do I weep?' replied Hendel; 'tell me why there is a tear in your coat.'

The Rabbi looked at his coat, which was, indeed, torn from top to bottom. Then only he remembered that his wife was dead, and threw himself to the ground to weep for her during seven days and seven nights.

"Soon afterwards the Diet assembled at Presburg. What you see now, my children, is nothing to what took place then. That was a good time. There were thousands of princes, counts, and nobles of all kinds covered with velvet, gold, and pearls. The earth trembled beneath their steps when they arrived with their spurs and their swords. Your eyes hurt you from looking at so much velvet and gold. The whole of the *kille* lived by the Diet. All day long the Schlossberg was full of counts and princes coming with their countesses and their princesses to make purchases either with ready money or on credit. You know that large beautiful house near the hill which belongs to Rebb Haim Schlesinger?

Well, it was with money made during the Diet that it was built. Many other *balbatim* * made their fortunes at the same time; every one then could live.

"Hendel, the daughter of Rebb Paltiel, remained all the blessed day before the palace of the Diet, and was never tired of looking at all this wealth of carriages, horses, hussars, princes, nobles, and counts. You might have passed there at no matter what hour of the day and you would have been sure to see Hendel, the daughter of Rebb Paltiel. She often came in late in the afternoon, and only then gave the Rabbi his dinner. And when he said to her 'Hendel, how is this? It seems to me that it is much past twelve o'clock.' 'The fact is,' she would reply, 'the meat was a long time cooking; that is why we are so late.' And when he asked her again, 'Hendel, why have you been so long a time?' she answered 'I was busy sewing and knitting.'

"Is it necessary, my children, to repeat what all Presburg knows. May He whose name be blessed preserve every Jewish child from the life led by Hendel, the daughter of Rebb Paltiel. Holy God of Israel! How could you permit that in the pious community of Presburg a child of Israel should commit such sins. It was enough to make the worst pedlar in the Schlossberg utter cries

* Fathers of families.

of despair; and it was for a *zaddik* * that such a misfortune was reserved.

"In short, my children, Hendel, the daughter of Paltiel, could always be seen walking with a *Goi*,† who gave her dresses and a thousand other presents, and no one knew why or wherefore. But one fine day it was known well enough, when, alas! it was too late. Hendel, the daughter of Rebb Paltiel, was lost. She had become —. May God forgive her!"

Here a cry uttered by the young girl who had remained seated without speaking a word on the edge of the bed, interrupted suddenly the grandmother's story. As for the boy, he lay still and rigid without making the least movement, his features betraying the most earnest attention.

Babele continued—

"You will have no trouble in understanding, my children, what was said at Presburg as to the conduct of Hendel, the daughter of Rebb Paltiel. No one spoke of it before the Rabbi; people thought that he would end by perceiving it himself. But it came to his knowledge in quite an unexpected manner. In this way. The Saturday of mortification Rebb Paltiel Wolf was preaching in the synagogue, and speaking of the perversity of the world and the corruption of men so much degenerated from their ancestors. There lived at

* Stain. † Christian.

that time in the *kille* a certain Loeb Goldstein, of whom it was said that he rode on horseback, drove out, and did business on the holy Sabbath Day. It was this very Loeb Goldstein that Rebb Paltiel Wolf was pointing to in his sermon, saying that such men had lost Jerusalem, and that if we were still in exile it was for having men of that kind among us. After the sermon, as the congregation were leaving the synagogue, people said to one another—'The Rabbi gave it to-day to Loeb Goldstein; why, indeed, is he such a bad Jew *(Posche Isroel)?*'

"These words had not escaped Loeb Goldstein. The day following he called upon the Rabbi; and as Goldstein was one of those men without any self-restraint, caring neither for God nor men, he said—

"'Yesterday, Rabbi, in your *deruscha* (sermon) you called me a bad man and a *Posche Isroel*. Forgive me, Rabbi, for I am ignorant and you are a learned scholar; still I am not so ignorant as not to know that a fortnight hence Hendel, the daughter of Rebb Paltiel will be in a position to celebrate the ceremony of circumcision.'

"May God forgive my sins! Was not that a blow for the Rabbi! At the very moment he was struck with apoplexy, first in the tongue, then in the heart. It was only in his death agony, and as if by a miracle, that he regained his speech.

Hendel was standing before his bed, shedding bitter tears. Then the Rabbi sat up, stretched out his hand, and said to her—

"'I tell you of a surety that you will be a laughing stock to your children and your grandchildren. You will bring forth a child, but a *benemmerin* will take from you the fruit of your entrails; you will not have the least joy from your child; you will not know it, you will never hear it speak.'".

Here, on Maierl's asking what a *benemmerin* was, the little old woman entered into a long explanation on the subject. *Benemmerinen* are certain midwives in league with evil spirits, who deprive women in child-birth of their new-born babes. As soon as a woman of this kind shows herself the child dies or becomes lame. Sometimes in place of the new-born children they substitute children who have come into the world stillborn; they also give the mothers milk-fever, and strike them with madness, and even death. When no direct recourse has been had to them they enter through keyholes. They have been seen also in the form of cats with glittering green eyes; and if they are not driven out at once with a broomstick misfortune will fall upon the house. To guard against these *benemmerin* it is necessary when the woman is in pain of childbirth, to go to a rabbi and obtain from him a sort of talisman. This

talisman consists in a few sheets of paper covered with letters representing the shield of David with some cabalistic lines, the initials of which are said to be a sure protection against evil spirits. Amongst them is one of King David's psalms. These sheets are hung up in the room of the woman who has been confined above the doors and windows, and they are left there as long as she keeps her bed. If the child proves to be of the male sex he has placed beneath his head the night before circumcision the very knife which the day afterwards is to incorporate him with Israel. It is necessary, moreover, to watch him throughout the night, saying prayers; for which reason the services of a rabbi are needed. The sponsor, who the next day will carry the child to the bench of circumcision, must look after him from time to time to see that no harm is done to him.

"From this moment," continued Babele, "Hendel, the daughter of Rebb Paltiel, had no longer an hour of happiness. She had wept all her tears, but in vain. Then suddenly she disappeared. Some said that she had thrown herself into the Danube, others thought they had seen her in the 'good place' (cemetery) stretched out on the tomb of her holy father, and weeping. But all this was untrue. In this very room where I am telling you the story she

lived until she was brought to bed. One of her aunts, her mother's sister, used to send her food; but she never came to see her. She would have thought she was committing a sin merely in approaching her. When she was on the point of being confined, Hendel was a prey to grief and anguish. She could be heard throughout the Schlossberg lamenting night and day. She wept and sobbed so bitterly that one might have thought it was all over with her. After three days all once more was silent; she had brought a child into the world. It was a little boy. As soon as he was born, this child of grief, she pressed him for a long time against her breast, saying—

"'My father, who is now dead, cursed me, and predicted that I should be a laughing stock to my children, and my grandchildren; that I should bring forth a child, but that the *benemmerinen* would carry it away. But no, on my soul that shall not be!'

"And she continued to watch the child, keeping it with her three days and three nights, for she feared continually lest the *benemmerinen* should come and steal it away. But at last she could bear up no longer against so much fatigue. The third night her eyes shut of themselves, and so firmly that one might have said they were closed with bolts. Then she fancied she saw a woman all in white, like one who was dead, enveloped in

her *taschrichim** approach her bed and snatch her child from between her arms. But she could not rise, her feet were like lead. She could not cry out, for her words stuck in her throat. At last from the bottom of her heavy heart she exclaimed '*Adonai Elohim!*' and all at once her eyes opened and she saw the *benemmerin* on the point of going out of the door with the child in her arms. Holy God of Israel! She jumped out of her bed as she was, in her chemise, with naked feet, and ran after the woman in white till she got to the door. There she seized her, wrestled with her, and fought with her until the *benemmerin* was forced to give up the child, and disappeared. The next day was seen in the Schlossberg a young woman running to and fro and crying out, 'Where is my child! my child! my child?' This woman was Hendel, the daughter of Rebb Paltiel Wolf—the beautiful Hendel. That very night, indeed, she had gone mad, and the next morning she was found lying on the cold ground with her child by her side. She was as if dead.

"The doctor bled her. The blood came out fresh and red. But her reason never came back and never from this moment did she recognise her child. From that time she sought it everywhere, and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of the Rabbi at his death."

* Winding sheet.

Babele, quite exhausted, was silent. Nothing could be heard but a stifled sob; it was the young girl. Suddenly Golde rose, went up to her grandmother, and with a sort of fervour, kissed her withered hand.

"May the merciful God," she cried, "preserve me from such a fate as Hendel's! Good-night grandmother!" and weeping hot tears she rushed out of the room.

It was now the depth of night. The young boy was once more a prey to violent fever, the result of his wound, and he seemed to be attacked by terrible dreams. Babele had lighted candles and had begun once more to pray silently and earnestly in her *Sidur*.

Pray, pray, good Babele, you have two to pray for; your grandson, that his body may be healed, your granddaughter, that her body and her soul may be kept pure by the shock of a striking example!

And now you bow down your head, now you are asleep. I will not even lift up the spectacles which you have just let fall. You might wake up and be angry with me, for you have need of sleep.

May God and His heavenly host watch over you and preserve you from all evil, true and faithful Babele!

THE RANDAR'S CHILDREN.

THE RANDAR'S CHILDREN.

I.—Mendel Wilna.

If you love the perfume of the forest, the verdure of the trees, and the singing of the larks, do not enter the ghetto! Larks fly in very small numbers above its walls, and in the ghetto the shade of the trees is not at all thick. There people have too many cares, and besides, there is not much space. In order to enjoy the coolness of the shade it is necessary first of all to plant trees; and to listen to the singing of the larks, one's soul must be free and exempt from pain. Let us add, too, that the Talmud reflects but little the joyous singing of the birds; the full light of the country is too bright for its old grizzle-browed eyes. We will, then, leave the ghetto for a time and seek some place where it may be possible to find the perfume of the forest, the verdure of the trees, and the song of the lark. We shall find them in the house of the Randar.

I much regret to have to give you first of all a dry definition of the word Randar; I should have much preferred to have given you the sense without previous explanation. But I will try to be brief.

Randar is a corruption of "arrendator," a word

unsuitable to the jargon of the ghetto, which for that reason has thought fit to shorten it by some syllables. Randar is the name given to the man who farms from a landed proprietor either a village tavern or a brandy distillery; for with us the "nobles" have the right to retail to the people the spirits they distil. Now as a matter of course they cannot carry on this trade themselves; so they have invented the Randar—a sort of intermediary, who farms the right of sale on high terms and saves them all trouble.

We say this at once and in the most direct manner in order that no one may entertain any illusion as to what sort of a person our Randar is; an illusion which in the course of the story we should not be able to sustain.

Rarely had a man been seen so happy as our Randar. People always feel it necessary to visit happiness with a little vengeance; and in an attack of jealousy which was not altogether ill-natured, our Randar had been surnamed the Rothschild of the village. The peasants called him Pan* Schmul. His true name was briefly Rebb Schmul. His full name was surrounded by such a prestige that it would be really difficult to give an idea of it to the reader.

* In Polish and Bohemian (Czech), the equivalent of Mr. or Sir.—TRANSLATOR.

After the proprietor and his all-powerful agents there was no one in the village more influential than our Randar. His house was the finest to be met with for several leagues round. He held court therein, as though it were an hereditary fief, and he a vassal esteemed and always well received by the proprietor and feudal chief. The farming of the distillery had been in the hands of his family from time immemorial. It had been transmitted from father to son, and thanks to a long series of years, had at last become a sort of private property. The distillery and the tavern, with all that belonged to them, constituted it is true the basis of the Randar's business. But in addition to that, as in the nature of things, he occupied himself with agriculture on a very vast scale. His fields were the best-cultivated, the fattest of oxen were his, and it was his flocks which yielded the finest wool.

It would be a great error to deny absolutely to the Jews all feeling of naïveté and innocence. The Jew of the ghetto is rarely, it is true, simple-minded and primitive; he is on the contrary sharp, angular, and as biting as an acid. In him a sad humility and much mental vivacity are found united. That can be understood without any necessity for explanation. The village Jew is more happy in this respect. He is nearer to nature;

and breathes fresh air. He is quite familiar with the song of the lark; but on the other hand he is heavier and less keen than his brother of the ghetto. The Jew's sharpness is after all a sort of moral weapon directed against certain offences which he is either unwilling or unable to repress by physical means. Accordingly the village Jew, for the very reason that he lives away from the ghetto, has no need to be clever and cunning. How could peasants understand this acuteness cultivated until it becomes a disease?

It was precisely this happy mixture of cunning and naïveté which formed the character of our Randar. His occupation could be read in his features. The upper part of his countenance and particularly his eyes, full of good-nature and kindness, sparkling almost like those of a woman, his rather narrow forehead, and his hair cut short, marked him unmistakably as a peasant; whereas a certain smile round the corners of his lips joined to a rather pointed chin, denoted evidently the merchant. It was for the rest, one of those faces which it is agreeable to look upon, because they do not inspire the least fear. Fear him? Him? Our Randar was surrounded by such an air of carelessness that merely to look at him was to fancy oneself as fat and as careless as he.

Our Randar in his time must have been a man

of superb presence. He had married at an early age when he was scarcely more than twenty. His wife belonged to one of the richest Randar families of the country; for the Randars form a sort of Jewish country nobility, and generally marry between themselves, since to manage their affairs they have need of wives brought up from their childhood to understand country life. The father of our Randar's wife had been one of the farmers of the same proprietor from whom Rebb Schmull farmed a distillery on his side; and people said without being able to swear to it, that at one time the young Count had had very tender looks for the Randar's pretty daughter—looks which could not however, be allowed to fall so low. It was for that reason that at the early age of sixteen she left her father's house as the wife of Rebb Schmull, and people speak even now of the magnificence of the wedding. The Count in fact had insisted on the young couple's being married at the manor house. He himself, with all the principal people attached to him, had been present at the ceremony in which the grand Rabbi of the district standing beneath the nuptial dais adorned with the nuptial ring the hand of the bride. Among the wedding presents the handsomest assuredly consisted of six girandoles in silver, given by the Count. They may be seen even now shining with all their original

brilliancy in the plate-cupboard of the Randar. They are only used, that is to say candles are only lighted in them, at the Feast of the Passover, when by the *seder** is celebrated the exodus from Egypt. It was said, too, that even long afterwards the Count hunted by preference in the neighbourhood of the Randar's farm. It was doubtless not chance alone that made him enter from time to time when, exhausted after the fatigues of the day, it occurred to him to see for himself the state of the distilleries. He had lately in fact taken possession of his father's property, for which reason he wished to know how everything was going on, and to see everything with his own eyes.

Later on he gave up hunting. In the meanwhile he got married. Even then the countenance of the Randar's wife glowed with such a soft beauty, that looking back into the past one could easily remember the years when the Count had thought it necessary to visit the distilleries in person. But what an interesting and curious scene it was when at the end of every quarter, the Randar had two strong horses harnessed to his old carriage in order to drive to the Count's to take him the farm dues; and when the gentle Rachel, standing before the door-step called to her husband just as he was starting—

* Ceremonies of the Passover.

"Do not forget to present my compliments to his excellency."

You should then have seen Rebb Schmull turn round and reply with a smile of indescribable slyness—

"Is that all, Rachel?"

How the cheeks of the Randar's wife became suffused with blushes, as if touched by the angel of modesty; blushes so light and so transparent that the breath of an angel (once more) ought alone to have blown them away.

Good Rachel, good Rebb Schmull! Even now after so many years, when you pass before my memory, I seem to feel on my forehead the mysterious wings of the Sabbath, and my soul, however agitated, becomes filled with peace.

Of the fourteen children which the Randar's wife had brought into the world twelve were dead. They lay side by side together in the cemetery of Munchengratz. Two only had survived, and they had inherited all the love which their mother would have borne to the other brothers and sisters; inherited is the word, for it cannot be said that she would have divided her love between them. Her whole love was given to each.

Hannele, who was the eldest, seemed the father's favourite; Moschele, the youngest, was the favourite of the mother. For a long time past

the Randar had thought of engaging a master for the two children; but —— he had always forgotten it. Such careless characters are often found among village Jews. As they do not experience for themselves any need of education, they do not for that reason seek to give it to their children. The Randar's wife often reproached him with this. She did not care to see her children growing up *like trees in the forest.* He replied then—

"Don't be annoyed Rachel, they will always know how to pray, to write, and to calculate. Moschele will be a Randar like his father and his grandfather. It will be enough for him to be able to add up the price of so many glasses, and to tell the value simply by touching it of an ox. What more does he need? As for our Hannele, let her be able to salt meat and to knit, and she will not fail to find a husband. Where is it written that a woman ought to know how to read, rather than to darn a stocking? Did you know much more Rachel? Come, tell me. Well, I only desire one thing—that Hannele may resemble you."

With this compliment the Randar always thought he had said enough. But *the trees in the forest* preoccupied the Randar's wife incessantly. It is always the women oddly enough, who see and foresee things from a greater distance than their

husbands. If at times in the ghetto, a child instead of becoming an old clothes man takes another course, be sure that it is generally the mother who has put the idea into his head. The father is simply there to authorize the thing by a command.

The Randar's wife had at last arranged that an old Rabbi from the ghetto, at about half a league's distance from the farm, should come three times a week to the country to teach the children. But the Rabbi, though it had been his business to do so for a long time, could get nothing into the children's heads.

He complained of *these village* brains and above all of Moschele, to whom it was impossible to explain the first book of the Bible; that is to say, the very one in which the death of Jacob is related. Things went on there as everywhere else. The children seeing that their father took no interest in their studies, learned nothing. We shall see further on how the young souls of these "trees" ended by deriving their intellectual nourishment from quite a different source.

It must be explained that the house of the Randar was known throughout half the world. Rebb Schmull like all potentates who wish to be spoken of, had everywhere panegyrists who proclaimed his renown to the sound of the trumpet.

It will scarcely be believed; but this army of the Randar's panegyrists was composed of wandering beggars; I mean of *schnorrer*.

Just as travellers exchange notes as to a good inn, so the *schnorrer* were in the habit of making appointments to meet at the house of the Randar. Was one of these wandering *schnorrer* about to undertake a campaign to the end of Hungary or to distant Poland? he was sure beforehand to find wide open to him in the depths of Bohemia, the house of the Randar.

"When you get to Bohemia," his comrade would say to him, "go to the house of Rebb Schmull the Randar, and tell him I sent you to pass Saturday with him, and that I wish him long life."

And as he toiled along the long road which leads from Poland to Bohemia, the *schnorrer* saw shining before him like a star of gold the name of the Randar. He heard this name pronounced on all sides; accordingly, when worn out with fatigue and hunger, he stretched himself in the course of the week on some hard bench, he consoled himself with this reflection—

"When I get to Bohemia I shall go to the house of the Randar Rebb Schmull, and shall pass there a jolly Saturday."

His misery seemed then less difficult to bear.

It was on Friday that you should have seen the Randar, from three o'clock in the afternoon, just shaved, with a velvet cap on his head, standing at the outer gate and waiting for his guests. Sometimes a whole band of the *schnorrer* arrived. He saluted each of them with a cordial *Salem alechem*, he asked each of them his name and condition, and then made them walk in. Among them they brought to him compliments and messages of friendship from all parts of the world, one from Hungary, another from Moravia, a third from Russian Poland. One might then have taken him for a king, to whom his different estates were sending addresses. In the evening he sat at table in the midst of his guests. Then how the Sabbath exhaled its perfumes and its flowers throughout the whole house, and how the *schnorrer* felt their hearts inundated with joy! There was nothing to be astonished at if often all the chords of joy began to sound together, and become so noisy that a real hubbub was the result. This happened generally at the end of the meal. Prayers having been said the Randar would exclaim—

"Now then, talk away as much as you like."

The *schnorrer* made no mistake as to the meaning which Rebb Schmull attached to the expression "Talk away." Every one drew upon the rich

treasures of his memory for a stock of good stories, clever tricks, and Talmudic subtleties. Each tried to surpass the other. Heavens! how Rebb Schmull laughed when some good joke pleased him. In his laughter there was every possible gradation; from the fulminating explosions of the volcano to the tender modulations of the nightingale. Everything about him laughed; even to the little wart on his nose which generally remained perched there with perfect indifference but which, when laughter began, seemed full of joy and skipped in every direction.

"Pan Schmull," the peasants collected in the tavern room would then say to one another, "is indeed a happy man."

At times, however, the chamber in which Rebb Schmull held festival became darkened and the Randar laughed no more. On the contrary his soul was profoundly sad. This happened above all when the Polish *schnorrer* related the troubles brought upon them by the Russians. The history of the tyranny of the modern Haman, bringing the axe to bear on the sacred tree of Israel, to cut from it images of the saints of the Greek religion, found a deep echo in the heart of the Randar. Why should I not say it? The autocrat of all the Russias had certainly nowhere a more determined enemy than, in the depths of Bohemia, was our Randar.

The life of these *schnorrer* interested Moschele most particularly. Often he remained up until past midnight listening to their tales. As for Hannele she generally went to bed soon after the meal. These wild and hungry countenances displeased her. The difference, then, between the dispositions of the two children showed itself very soon.

Moschele had attached himself with all the force of his child's heart to one of these *schnorrer*; he loved him with all the love of which he was capable. The name of this man was Mendel Wilna. Mendel came regularly once a year to the house. On these occasions he was looked upon less as a beggar than as a friend who honoured the Randar by his visit. He was of lofty and powerful stature, which stood out in a singular manner beneath his semi-oriental costume. On Saturday he laid aside his dusty garments to envelop himself in a silk caftan, while a cap trimmed with sable covered the black curls which in ringlets fell from each temple to a face full of nobility and expression. It was impossible, then, to look at him without a sort of shudder.

When he arrived, the countenance of this *schnorrer* was always marked by a profound melancholy. None knew the reason of it. Rebb Schmull thought his brain might be deranged as

the result of deep and assiduous study; for often Mendel Wilna would speak with extraordinary enthusiasm of Jerusalem and its approaching restoration. On every other subject he was silent and reserved; but as soon as he began to speak of Jerusalem he went beyond all bounds. It was perhaps this holy bias of his which had gained for him Rebb Schmull's affection, though the latter looked upon it as a fixed idea. Mendel was the intimate friend of the little boy. They wandered together on the Sabbath into the fields. The beggar then spoke of the land of his distant home, described to him all the countries he had visited related stories and told him about the Bible. As for his native land he never mentioned it. One day Mendel Wilna had arrived at the Randar's a little earlier than usual. It wanted but a fortnight to Pentecost. He was received, as always, with joy. Soon afterwards Mendel announced that he had come to take leave of him for rather a long time —perhaps for ever. These words made Moschele weep. The Randar then said to him—

"But tell me plainly where you are going, Rebb Mendel."

"I am going to Jerusalem," he replied, and he at the same time laid aside his travelling staff.

"*Schmah Isroel*," * cried the Randar's wife

* Hear, O Israel.

quite frightened, "what a journey you are going to undertake! Are you not afraid of some accident happening to you?"

The *schnorrer* raised his darkened eyes devoutly.

"He who has preserved me until now, and has given me wherewith to live for so many years," he said in a soft voice; "He who allows me to go through the world, and has placed on my path a Rebb Schmull and a Rachel—blessed be they and their descendants—He will also see that I arrive safely at Jerusalem. I shall be there for the *rosch haschone*.* I can wait no longer. I must go. If God permits me to return I will bring you back some of the sacred earth, and you also dear Madame Rachel."

The following day was a Saturday. In the afternoon the *schnorrer* made his customary excursion with Moschele into the country. Mendel was now very silent. The young boy walked by his side without hearing from him a single story. The heat of the sun made them seek the shade; and without any particular object they directed their steps towards a little elm wood which cast its green shadows not far from the Randar's farm. The light played agreeably through the trees. It was pleasant in the midst of the universal silence of nature to walk beneath branches which were

* New Year.

musical with songs of birds. Moschele, with joy in his heart, stretched his arms towards a green bough which was hanging in front of him in order to pluck it.

"God help you," cried the beggar suddenly awakened from his dreams, "do you forget that to-day is the Sabbath?"

"Is it so great a sin then," replied the little boy smiling in an incredulous manner, "to pluck such a beautiful green bough?"

"Silence," replied the *schnorrer* half annoyed, "do you think that God gave us the Sabbath for us to go into woods and pluck branches? These branches, like human beings, must have their day of rest. Do you not know that on this day your father allows none of his people to work, and does not touch a piece of money himself. Why should a wretched piece of money which has been extracted from the earth enjoy a benefit denied to a green bough? Don't do such a thing again Moschele; give me your hand and promise me that you will not pluck branches from trees on the holy Sabbath."

"I promise you," said Moschele; and by the manner in which these words were pronounced the *schnorrer* saw that they came from the heart. A flush of joy then crossed his face; and he looked at the child with profound emotion.

"Come Moschele," he said to him, after some

moments of silence; "I want to-day to tell you something which I have long had on my soul. I have not been able to do so until now. But the time has at last come. God alone knows whether I shall die on my journey, or what my fate will be. Now I want you never to forget Mendel Wilna; I wish you on the contrary to remember him."

As he spoke thus he threw himself beneath a tree, and Moschele sat down by his side. The repose of the Sabbath reigned through the whole of nature. It seemed to be keeping silent its thousands of voices in order to give all its attention to the *schnorrer's* speech.

He began as follows:

"Listen Moschele; you are still a child, and your life is like the copybook of a schoolboy, who has only traced a few lines in it. What does King David say: 'I was once young and am now old.' Before very long the copybook will be covered with lines, and one fine day God will take it up. Let there be nothing in it of which you need be ashamed. But what will astonish you most is this; you will think that you yourself have filled the copybook, and yet you will not find six lines in it of your own writing. Thousands of men will write in it, and you will scarcely even hold the pen. You will only write at the dictation of others. But are you listening to me?"

Mendel need not have asked this question. The

child was full of attention. His entire soul seemed to have passed into his eyes; and the words of Mendel flowed before him like a torrent which can be heard but not seen.

The *schnorrer* continued—

"You know that you are the son of a rich man; and even if your father—may he live for a hundred years!—should neglect your education, I know that you will get on all the same. But I also know that your father makes a great mistake if he thinks that his Moschele will be content to remain in the midst of his oxen and his peasants. Your father, you must see,—may he forgive me—is one of the men of the ancient time. When, after looking at an ox, he can tell directly how much it weighs, or when seated in the midst of his peasants he joins them in their gaiety and good humour, he thinks he has done enough and that no more is expected of a Jew. But the world is changed. The Talmud itself does not now help us much. You may bend over it entire nights. When the morning comes you will not be able to make use of it. It will certainly be much better for you to know how to write grammatically a good German letter. I also advise you to study seriously; for one fine day you will see me here again, and then I shall say to you, 'Moschele, do you remember Mendel Wilna? What have you been studying; and will you go with me to Jerusalem?"

"To Jerusalem?" said the little boy, filled with holy dread. "But are yougoing there now, Rebb Mendel? Take me with you at once."

"Little mad boy," replied the *schnorrer*, with a smile, "impossible at present. You are too young."

"Do only old people go then?"

"No," replied Mendel, "people go there at every age. But you must understand that Jerusalem, my Jerusalem, is not yet rebuilt."

"I could help to rebuild it," said Moschele, in a dreamy way.

"You cannot do that either; you are not strong enough. You should have shoulders like Samson the Strong. Otherwise the burden would be too much for you."

"But who will rebuild Jerusalem?"

"I," he exclaimed, in a solemn voice. "God destines Mendel Wilna for the work. That is why I am now going to Jerusalem the ancient, to form an idea of the task. When you are older you will be able to help, for I see that you are one of those whom I shall need. Wherever there is a Jewish soul I shall knock at the door and call out —'Here is Mendel Wilna; he wants to rebuild Jerusalem. Come all of you with him!'"

While pronouncing these last words the *schnorrer* had risen. His face was illumined by the rays of the setting sun. He had a strange look. He

turned from west to east, where the sombre tints of evening had already fallen. "There," he said, "there is where Jerusalem lies."

Moschele, in his turn, looked towards the east. Suddenly the mendicant made a movement. "I have something more to show you, Moschele," he cried; "something which you have not yet seen. Look." He pulled up the sleeves of his caftan so as to uncover his left arm.

"What do you see, Moschele?" he said.

The boy saw Hebrew letters the colour of blood, which had been cut into the flesh with a sharp knife.

"The word Jerusalem," cried Moschele; "*Schmah Isroel!* It is forbidden to do such things."

"I did it all the same," replied the beggar, raising his voice; "whenever I roll the phylacteries round my arm, I see the word. Do not speak of it to any one; I have shown it to you alone. You will remember this Sabbath day. Now let us go; it is getting late."

Just as they left the wood the day began to decline. In the west the last rays of the sun were still shining. But what was above all visible was the silent farmhouse of the Randar, the roof of which was crowned as with a glory. Moschele was not looking that way. He walked with his

eyes turned towards the east, while Mendel, holding him by the hand, dragged him in the opposite direction. The peasants returning from the fields saluted the little boy and his companion. Coming towards them trotting on a horse harnessed to a plough, was Honza, whose acquaintance we shall soon make. He held in his hand a green bough which he used as a whip. When he saw Moschele he began to smile. But Moschele would not have torn a bough from its tree.

They walked back seriously and in silence.

II.—The Great Journey.

The next day the *schnorrer* left the house of the Randar to begin his journey. He carried in his hand a long stick, to the end of which was attached a little bundle containing all he possessed. As he passed the threshold he did not fail to kiss devoutly the *mezouza*, that is to say, the strip of parchment suspended over the door in a case of tin, and bearing the mysterious words, "*Schadai*," and "Hear, O Israel!" The Randar and his wife accompanied him as far as the outer door.

"I must remind you once more," said the Randar, "not to forget to bring me back a little bag filled with earth from Jerusalem. That is a thing which cannot be had every day."

"I should first forget myself," cried the beggar, much moved.

Rebb Schmull was returning to the house when, suddenly his wife exclaimed, "Moschele, where are you? Come, that Rebb Mendel may give you his *benschen*."

But the Randar's wife called in vain; Moschele did not come. Then, as his good mother did not wish to deprive her child of Mendel's blessing, she went into the house to see whether he was anywhere to be found. But she soon returned, looking quite sad.

"I cannot find him," she said. "Rebb Mendel, I cannot let you go until you have blessed my Moschele. I must go and look for him everywhere."

The *schnorrer* waited patiently. But Moschele could not be found.

"Do not keep him waiting any longer, Rachel," said the Randar, "Rebb Mendel has a long journey to make. Jerusalem is not just round the corner."

"I leave him my best blessing," said the beggar.

"No, no," exclaimed the Randar's wife, shaking her head, "you shall not move a step, Rebb Mendel, until my Moschele has received your blessing;" and she once more called for him, and in such a loud voice that one might really have thought her child's happiness was at stake, and that only the

beggar, by laying his hands upon him and blessing him, could ensure his well being.

"Come, be calm," said the Randar, with a bitter-sweet smile, "if people saw you they would burst out laughing."

"And do you think I should mind?" replied Rachel, lowering her voice a little. "I should care very little for the mockery of any one who would laugh at a *broche*."*

Meanwhile the Randar had walked on with Rebb Mendel. Just as he was turning the corner of the house where suddenly the high road began, he called out, "By my soul, is not that our Moschele?"

"Where, where?" asked the Randar's wife, running forward at her husband's words.

Moschele was distant about forty paces. When his parents came up with him they could scarcely keep serious. He had a cane in his hand, and bore fastened round his neck a little bundle. It was the *schnorrer* in miniature.

"What has happened to you, Moschele?" cried the mother, with an uneasy smile. "Where are you off to? Are you going to start on your travels?"

"I am going to Jerusalem with Rebb Mendel," said the little boy, not hesitating a moment.

"To Jerusalem!" said the Randar; and he

* Blessing.

began to laugh as though Moschele had told him that he was going straight to heaven.

The mother enfolded Moschele's head with her arms, and said to him in a sad voice, "That is a nice thing, Moschele; and you did not even tell your mother that you wanted to go."

"I should have come back again," said Moschele, "as soon as we had built up Jerusalem."

At this answer the Randar laughed more than ever.

"Let him go, Rachel," he said, "do not stop him. I wish him good-bye. Why not? He wants to see the world. A pleasant journey to you. When you come back bring something with you for me."

He made a sign to the beggar and to his wife. "Let him go," he meant to say, "I am not anxious about him." But the mother pressed the child more and more tenderly in her arms, as if he had really been on the point of quitting her. The beggar, in presence of this strange scene, remained silent and thoughtful. The Randar, rather vexed at his son's desire to go on his travels, a desire which Moschele had formed very seriously, said to his wife with a reproachful air:—"Enough of that; let him go. Good-bye, Moschele, I hope you will be back in time for the *Souccoth*."*

* Feast of Tabernacles.

The Randar's wife gave a last kiss to her child, then one more, and finally the last of all. Then with a peculiar smile she said, "Well, good-bye, Moschele, and don't forget your mother."

It seemed as though in this prelude to a separation which was but apparent, she wished to realize to herself beforehand the inevitable separation which must some day take place. One of the enigmas placed around a mother's heart! Who is wise enough to guess them? "So," cried the Randar's wife, speaking to her son once more as she walked away, "you will come back to us for *Souccoth*. Do not disappoint us."

"Do not take him too far, Rebb Mendel," she whispered to the beggar. Then she turned away.

The father and mother went homewards. The child took a few steps, but not towards the paternal abode. In the midst of this scene the *schnorrer* remained uncertain what to do. Meanwhile he went to the side of the little boy, as if he had really consented to his proposal and looked upon him as a faithful companion for the whole of the long journey. Moschele walked bravely ahead. The pair were already at some distance from the farm when the wind, beginning to blow, dried up the last of the tears with which his mother's parting kisses had filled Moschele's eyes.

After a quarter of an hour's walk, Mendel said

to Moschele, without laying stress on his words—"Are you not tired, Moschele?"

"Not in the least, Rebb Mendel."

The *schnorrer* said no more. They walked with firm steps. But after a time he stopped again. "You must be tired now," he said, "I can see it."

"What do you see it in, Rebb Mendel?" replied Moschele, quite mortified. "Am I not always in front of you?"

"Very well," said the *schnorrer* with a laugh, "let us continue our journey."

A little further on Mendel said again, "I am sure you can scarcely walk another step."

The young boy made no reply. His eyes were full of tears and of anger, and he continued to walk on more briskly than ever, pretending not to have heard.

Mendel now found himself in a great difficulty. Was he not the cause of the child's persistence? How was he to get out of his head the idea he had himself placed there? It seemed impossible.

"Do you want to wear your feet out?" he cried at last. "How can I take you with me?"

"Rebb Mendel!" cried the child from the bottom of his soul. This violent exclamation frightened the *schnorrer*. Abashed, he covered his face with his hands. He sighed and groaned as though he had a great crime on his conscience. Then taking the child's hand, he said to him, "You will think,

Moschele, that I have been laughing at you; and you will look upon Mendel Wilna as your greatest enemy. Little mad boy that you are! Do you think seriously that I am going to take you to Jerusalem? You must be a good many years older before that. But now do not break my heart, and go back home, Moschele. Your father and mother will be anxious about you. Go back dear child."

It happens sometimes that, by a curious sort of instinct, children see the limits at which their happy illusions must come to an end. At the sound of the wind which blows down their card palaces, they feel that they must renounce their wild hopes. Their resignation and their courage are really heroic when they find themselves standing amid the ruins of their happiness. Men are sometimes not so brave. How many of them hold still in their hands the green branch of certain inclinations and certain dreams, when, properly regarded, its withered leaves should fill them with shame!

Moschele saw at once from the last words of the *schnorrer* that it was all over with his journey. Without speaking a word he turned his steps homewards, and walked towards the house.

"Do you not wish me to bless you," cried Mendel, from the bottom of his heart.

For the second time the voice of his friend had

its effect. Moschele returned. Mendel laid his hands on his head and blessed him, as Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh. This time it was Moschele who was in a hurry to get back. He was impatient to escape from a heaven now half destroyed; a heaven which he had himself created and adorned with the most brilliant stars. When Moschele found himself once more at the entrance to the village which he had but recently left, he was very sad. At the door of her house stood Baruschka, who had been his nurse. When she saw the little boy she called to him. But Moschele who, as a rule, did not pass without entering, lowered his head and passed on; and when she called a second time he looked round, but immediately afterwards, like a frightened animal, took to his heels. At the back of the village he pulled up. He had almost lost his breath. After a moment's repose he again went on rapidly, describing round the village a large circuit. There were no peasants in the field, for it was Sunday. He reached the elm wood where the birds were singing delightfully on the very trees beneath which he had walked the day before with Mendel. From one of them he tore down a branch and placed it in his cap, doing so perhaps from a vague feeling of vengeance against his old friend. He afterwards sat down on the bank of the rivulet

which winds close to the forest, and plunged the green branch into its stream. For some moments he amused himself by looking at the water flowing through the leaves. Then he began to whip the water with the branch, and did not stop until all the leaves had fallen, so that he had nothing in his hand but the naked stick. Then he threw away the stick and got up.

He at last arrived close to the Randar's house, but he had not courage enough to go in before every one. He accordingly passed round by the wall of the court-yard, and got over it at a place where a hay-loft adjoined it. Without observing whether in the court yard there was any witness of his shame, he climbed up the narrow ladder leading to the hay-loft. The pigeons, disturbed by his approach, flew out. Then he concealed himself in the newly cut, sweet-smelling hay, and began to weep bitterly. Hannele alone had seen him. She at once told her mother. The Randar's wife thought the child would fall ill if he remained lying down in the hay. But Rebb Schmull said to her with a laugh:—"Let him wear out his folly, Rachel; the hay will not hurt him." The Randar's wife, however, shook her head. An inner voice said to her that her child had sufficiently expiated his error by the destruction of his illusions. She went into the court-

yard, and at the foot of the ladder leading to the hay-loft cried out—"Moschele, won't you come down to your mother?"

It was not until she had called him three times that the little boy appeared. The mother in no way reproached him. She dried with her kisses the tears which filled his eyes, and brought him back to the house.

III.—Social Relations.

Since the day when he had failed so unhappily in his project of a journey to the Holy Land, considerable changes had taken place in Moschele's life.

The Rabbi who had formerly complained so much of Moschele's hard head could not now find praise enough for the clearness of his intellect and the loftiness of his views. Moschele had, with extreme rapidity, read the Bible from one end to the other. He was never tired, and always wanted to go on studying. The Rabbi could not imagine the source of this extreme activity. It had a holy origin; but that did not prevent him from attributing it all to himself. One day, when they were studying the third book of Moses, which treats

of the duties of priests and Levites, his friend Moschele put to him this question—

"Tell me, Rabbi, how could Moses know beforehand all that would be required from the priests at Jerusalem?"

"God taught him," was the answer; "God, on Mount Horeb, communicated to the prophet all the contents of the Thora."

"Then Moses's Rabbi was God?"

"For forty days and forty nights God instructed him in every way. If Moses, our master, forgot anything, God at once reminded him of it; and thus it came to pass that Moses did not forget one single line of the Thora. He wrote out from memory the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Scriptures."

"And without making any mistake?"

"How silly you are; what mistake could he make with God for his Master?"

In the evening, as he returned to the ghetto, the Rabbi said to the Randar's wife—

"Pay attention to your Moschele; he is a very intelligent child. He must study the Talmud."

This piece of news was rewarded by three brilliant silver pieces which the Randar's wife placed in his hands, thrusting at the same time a pound of coffee into his pocket.

"Tell that to my husband," she said to the

Rabbi, "he does not think our Moschele capable of learning anything."

It was fortunate for Moschele that he had not passed his early years in a ghetto. There if some Rabbi had proposed to his parents to make him read the *Gemara* he would have had to do it. But the Talmud was to the taste neither of the Randar nor of his wife.

Rebb Schmull was always the careless man we know him to be. He did not care much about the education of his children. Who knows? Perhaps without being aware of it he was obeying an instinct of common-sense.

The education which the Jews receive is really a curious enigma. From a very early age children are nourished at a source from which has sprung for thousands of years the torrent of the ineffable. These children ripen soon; their perceptions are cultivated and sharpened. The holy and immortal book is placed without the slightest suppression quite entire in their hands. They can play with it as with a two-edged knife. Whilst to children who are taught to make the sign of the cross, pages arbitrarily detached from the Scriptures are alone given, the Jewish child has the whole of them beneath his eyes. No power, secular or religious, forbids him to read such and such a passage. He is free to examine, to in-

terpret and to subtilize as he pleases. Has not this an incalculable significance for the future?

There are many other inconveniences from which our Moschele will be preserved, and from which he could not have escaped had he passed his earlier years in a ghetto. The *trees of the forest* which oppressed so often the heart of the Randar's wife, had at least one thing good about them; they grew free and straight in the open air. It is certainly an excellent plan to allow children thus to grow up of themselves. But unfortunately this truth is perceived only by a small number. As for leaving the child to take care of itself, not interfering with the growth, so to say, of its heart and soul, while still endeavouring to communicate to it the most salutary impressions—that is a matter which very few parents understand. There is always in family life a certain amount of mud which gets mixed with the limpid stream of youth. Purification will be a matter of time. But meanwhile the mud penetrates into the most holy parts of our being. There is a name for that; we then say that it is impossible to get rid of first impressions.

The world in which the Randar's children lived was a singular one. Although born and brought up in the village they were still not villagers. Though living in the midst of peasants they wore

the clothes that are worn in towns; a circumstance which kept them at a certain distance from the children around them. The Randar's wife took care moreover that it should be so; and that is why the *trees of the forest,* that is to say, Moschele and Hannele, had no companions but each other.

The Randar himself had, in a general way, adopted the rural tone. He was half a peasant. He had indeed passed his entire life in the village. He was familiar with its history. Thence arose a singular mixture of things. He had a good deal of the peasantry about him; he possessed more than one of their characteristics. Like them he was little-minded, headstrong, and narrow in his views; but nevertheless he was greatly their superior. He had more intelligence, as was natural, considering his occupation. Often he would say, "I live by my peasants." This avowal was the key to much.

Pan Schmull was, properly speaking, a lord of the village; and the peasants acknowledged him willingly as their suzerain. He drank from the same glass as they; said "thou" to them, and did not mind being embraced by them when they had drunk too much beer. The Jew and his house had a singular attraction for them. An interchange of good offices went on there from which every one derived advantage.

When the peasants entered the Randar's house they saluted him in these words, "Blessed be Jesus Christ;" and Rebb Schmull replied, "For ever and ever, amen."* The peasants uttered these words with a certain naïveté, without altogether knowing what they said. As for the Randar, he knew well enough; but it was necessary for him to live. For the rest, in religious matters Rebb Schmull and the peasants made concessions to one another. He accompanied the glorification of Jesus Christ with his amen; but that did not prevent him from giving himself up in their company to his devotions. Often he could be seen walking about among the peasants with his phylacteries tied round his head and his arm; and it will perhaps be thought strange that it occurred to none of them to laugh. "Pan Schmull is at his prayers," they would say when the Randar, reciting the *Schmona Esre*, went into a corner, and in presence of all the Slavonian peasants sounded the language of Zion. The peasants then pushed their glasses together and whispered during the whole time that the prayer lasted. Perhaps the Randar thus kept the peasants in respect, for often he performed among them the functions of arbiter. All the history of the village passed in

* The salutations habitually exchanged among Slavonian peasants.—TRANSLATOR.

fact in the inn; and the Randar held in his hands every thread of this history. It was here that the sharpest quarrels took place, that the loudest harangues were pronounced. On one side were uttered complaints against officials, on the other curses against the task work. The inn was a sort of theatre in which every kind of passion could be exhibited. If a dispute became serious the Randar at once settled it. It was his interest to see the two parties live in harmony beneath his roof. He displayed wonderful talent in circumstances of this kind. He waited until a pitch of excitement had been reached which seemed to foretell at any moment a sanguinary result. It was only then that he came forward as intermediary. He called upon everyone to be silent, and in a long discourse began by summing up, elucidating, and finally smoothing down the subject of contention; for, as presented by him, things took quite another aspect. Having done this he addressed himself every moment to one of the leaders in the quarrel. "Come, Pawel, am I not right?" And the man thus challenged replied in the affirmative. Then, turning to another one, he said, "Waczlaw, what have you to answer to that?" and so on until he had put every one in the wrong except himself. The peasants scarcely ever saw through these tactics, and they always ended by saying, "Pan Schmull is indeed a clever man," and their respect for the

Randar increased by several degrees. It is sad, but it must be avowed, that in his inward heart the Randar despised the peasants. They were too superstitious for him; and as moreover his rhetoric imposed upon them, he regarded them as very inferior to himself. Such errors are common to many men.

When on Sundays dancing was going on in the inn, the children were never allowed to enter. During this time they were shut up in a room by themselves where the sound of the rejoicings of an intoxicated crowd could not reach them.

"What do you want here?" said the Randar's wife one day to Moschele, who wished to enter the large room, "do you want to see Honza and Wasta drunk, and trying to cut one another's throats? What pleasure can it be to see a drunken peasant? Thank God, with your hands raised to heaven that you are saved from such a sight." Then she added, "We Jews are not made for this sort of thing. One must be a peasant to remain all day long in an inn; is that an example to follow?"

Another day Moschele wished to taste the white spirit which the peasants found so much to their liking that it was necessary every day to provide an immense bottle of it.

Then the Randar's wife cried out as if he had asked for poison.

"*Schmah Isroel*! Do you want to drink brandy?

Do you forget that you are the son of Rebb Schmull? What Jewish child born of honest parents drinks brandy? Brandy is for peasants alone. Drink two drops of it only, and you will lose your *sechel*."*

We are already acquainted with Moschele's friends the beggars. But he and Hannele had in the village another acquaintance; I mean Honza, the little boy with the green bough. He divided himself between the two children. But Hannele possessed the greater part of his friendship. Honza was intended for a studious life; he was to embrace the ecclesiastical career, and for some time past he had been learning Latin from the priest. This circumstance had a great effect in placing them on an equality; and the wife of the Randar was pleased with the relations existing between them.

It must be admitted that if the friendship existing between these children was not so firm as might have been desired, the Jewish Sabbath had much to do with it. That day, indeed, Moschele and Hannele were not called upon to work; whereas Honza went to the priest. On Sunday, on the other hand, the old Rabbi came from the ghetto to work with the children, and then Honza on his side was free. Thus it happened that they did not see one another so often as they would have liked.

* Wita.

Hannele was the chief sufferer from this; for, since the departure of Mendel Wilna, Moschele had found a silent and mysterious companion, of whose society he was never tired. This companion was himself. With time, however, Hannele had found a compensation. Every Saturday, with her *siderl** in her hand, she walked as far as the church, and just outside, where stood a large wooden cross with the figure of the Saviour upon it, repeated the Rabbi's lesson. To tell the truth, she went there only to wait until the clock struck four; for then Honza left his clerical tutor, and came to have a talk with her. Their conversation always began in the following manner:

"Have you brought any?" was Honza's first question.

Then Hannele made, with a smile, a little sign of assent, and took from one of her apron pockets a paper containing something which Honza saluted each time with greedy eyes.

It was a piece of *barches*, or Sabbath bread, which Hannele had saved him from her own particular portion. This *barches* had become an object of great jealousy; for the other little boys in the village, whenever they saw Honza with his mouth full, said—

"There is Honza again with his Jewish wife."

Honza behaved like a sensible child. He paid

* Little prayer book.

very little attention to these pleasantries. Substantially, was he not to be envied? For whereas the others had no such delicacy except at Christmas or at Easter, Honza had it every Saturday. Did not that alone justify his friendship for Hannele?

When he had finished eating, he generally said—

"Yes, indeed; the Jews make capital biscuit."

"You liked it?" Hannele then would say.

The question was quite needless.

Often the children's conversation turned on subjects which one would not have expected to find them talking about; religion, for instance. This, however, happens oftener than people think; for the word "God," which children do not quite understand, preoccupies them for that reason all the more, and takes in their hands all sorts of forms.

Once, when Honza had finished his *barches*, Hannele said to him—

"Now, Honza, you must *benschen*."

"What does that mean?" asked Honza. "I suppose it is Hebrew."

Hannele, quite ashamed, was obliged to admit that it was indeed Hebrew. I do not know why this confession made her blush so much.

"Among us," she said, by way of explanation,

"when we have eaten anything we have to *benschen* and thank God. Do they do that with you, Honza?"

"I say the *Pater Noster*," replied Honza; "and when I want anything I go to St. John Nepomucene, whose image you see on the bridge."

"When you want anything!" exclaimed Hannele, quite astonished.

She did not understand the intermediary part played by the saints of Catholicism between God and man.

"And my mother goes to him also," added Honza.

"But tell me," asked Hannele, "does he give you what you pray for?"

"Always," replied Honza, quite seriously.

Thereupon Hannele begged him to repeat his prayer to her—the one he said every day, and not the one he addressed to the saint on the bridge. She meant the *Pater Noster*. Honza reflected a few moments; for in matters of belief men are all alike. We do not like to communicate to others the mysterious secrets of our soul. Nevertheless he began; and as he was not at the time praying, but was, so to say, subjecting himself to an examination, he recited his prayer with more soul and more warmth than usual. The words of the Saviour in Honza's Slavonian language, and their

inner meaning, of which the effect is the same on all hearts, seemed singular to the young girl. She understood the prayer; but she was astonished that it contained no mention of Jesus Christ. Then, after some moments of deep reflection, she said—

"Honza, if you want to please me, say it again."

He first looked at her very attentively, as if to convince himself that there was nothing ironical in her request; then he repeated the prayer. Hannele held her head down so low that she almost touched with her forehead the prayer book which she had placed in her bosom. Honza had scarcely finished, when she at once said—

"It is very easy; I believe I really know it by heart. Shall I repeat it to you?"

Such a feat of memory seemed incredible to Honza.

"You think you know it, but you do not."

"Just listen," returned Hannele, "and you can help me if I make a mistake. Promise not to laugh."

"Begin, then," said Honza, with a serious air.

Hannele began. She was very successful with the first sentence, and as far as "on earth as it is in heaven."

"Why," she interrupted, "do you say 'on earth?' God is only in heaven."

Honza looked fixedly at his intrepid questioner. Then, turning very red, he replied—

"The fact is, I do not know."

That was certainly the best answer.

"Well, how does it go on? Tell me the first word."

"'Give us this day our daily bread'"—

"'Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses.'"

"Go on. 'As we forgive them'"—

Thanks to Honza, Hannele reached the end—

"But deliver us from evil."

"Now Amen," said Honza, when she had finished.

"No, I won't," replied Hannele, "Amen" being a Hebrew word which occurred often in her own prayers.

"Why not?"

"Because I don't wish."

"In that case I will say it for you," cried Honza; and with one breath he called out twenty times at least the word "Amen," which echo everywhere repeated. Hannele had closed her ears. She would not hear the word; it had for her a terrible sound.

Then Honza wanted to know what prayers Hannele said. But she replied that he would not

understand, since they were in Hebrew. Honza, however, insisted; and Hannele, in return for his having obliged her just before, turned over the leaves of the *siderl* until she came to the *benschen*.

At the sight of the Jewish letters, twisted and turned, and running in contradiction of all rules from right to left, Honza was quite confused. He became almost alarmed: and it was perhaps through a sentiment of dread that he snatched the book from the young girl, and called out with a laugh, "Is that what you pray from?"

"Give me my *siderl*, Honza," cried Hannele, her soul disturbed by all sorts of fears. But the little boy ran as if mad round the cross, holding his booty in his hands. Hannele followed him closely. But she could not catch him; and still he cried out, "Is that what you pray from?"

Hannele then threw herself on to the green turf, and, inconsolable, gave herself up to her despair. "If you do not give me back my *siderl*," she said, in the midst of her sobs, "I will never speak to you again."

Then Honza returned, and placed the book beside her. Hardly had she regained possession of it, when at one bound she got up and ran straight to the house.

Honza, quite disconcerted, followed her with his eyes.

IV.—Future Projects.

Often when she remarked what progress Moschele was making in his studies, the Randar's wife became sad. She was convinced that the child was, so to say, a living sacrifice. She started always from this thought; that Moschele's capacities were too great for him to remain in the village.

"Would God," she often said to herself, "have given him so much ability if He had decreed beforehand that the child was to pass all his life with peasants and in the midst of beer barrels." She did not understand that in the village as elsewhere good heads might be needed.

Honza had no idea how often he was the subject of her silent monologues. In her eyes the education of Honza was like some gigantic tree, by the side of which that of Moschele was only a little shrub. She was constantly, then, comparing the two children, and she at last peruaded herself that it was all over with Moschele's happiness. What exertions this good mother made to overcome her husband's obstinacy! Such are men, that she never ran the risk of speaking to him directly on the subject she had at heart, knowing well his prejudice against book-learning. This woman,

who in regard to everything else, had with her husband but one heart, one soul, one will, found herself separated from him by an abyss as soon as there was any question of their child. For some time past the Randar's wife nourished a thought, the audacity of which was a source of alarm even to herself. She wished Moschele to go through a regular course of study. She did not ignore the difficulty of this project, which she saw standing before her like a steep mountain. But an internal voice called upon her to climb it, even though she reached the top in a lifeless condition.

"What advantage has Honza over my child!" she often said to herself in the middle of the night. "His father Waczlaw is the greatest drunkard in the village; he possessed fields, vines, meadows, and has squandered the whole of it. His wife is always begging me not to let her husband have any more drink. But is it not our business to sell it! In spite of all that Honza will be educated: His mother stints herself for the sake of the child, and if Honza's mother does that, are there not better reasons why I should do the same? To think that the greatest drunkard should be able to do for his child what my own husband will not allow me to do for mine! Is it necessary for me to go to the synagogue in silk dresses? But the fact is he thinks less of his child than of a silk dress."

Often she resorted to the following artifice.

She had Moschele examined in presence of his father.

Among the *schnorrer* who frequented the house, there was always one who knew the Bible perfectly. Consequently every Saturday Moschele was put through an examination in the *Chumeseh*,* and then had to reply to all the questions put by the learned beggar. Generally speaking the child came out of it very well; and then the mother was always the first to praise him. She generally invited the entire household to be present at the examination, so as to render it as solemn as possible, and also to awaken in this manner the ambition of her husband. Moschele himself did not suspect his mother's designs. She often said to him with tears that he was not well treated. But he did not know what she meant, for no one did him the least harm. Every day she spoke of Honza. She already looked upon him as at least a canon living in his own house on the Hradjin, at Prague, and wearing a cross of gold on his breast. Hearing how his mother spoke of him, Moschele had also accustomed himself to regard Honza as quite an extraordinary being. One day the bishop had come to the village to confirm the children; from this moment Moschele looked upon Honza as the

* Pentateuch.

future bishop. He surrounded him with the same splendour, he placed on his head the same mitre which the prelate had worn, and he saw shining on his breast a cross as large and as brilliant as the sun itself. When he had in imagination dressed him up after this fashion, Moschele honoured and respected him like an idol.

It happened by chance that this veneration for Honza grew suddenly like a tree laden at once with flowers and fruit. One Saturday, no *schnorrer* having arrived that day to examine him, Moschele, who had nothing to do, was looking out of the window. Hannele was seated near the cross before the church. By her side was Honza, and as far as could be judged by appearances, the conversation between them was very animated. Rarely did Moschele enter alone upon a conversation with Honza; but in presence of Hannele he felt courageous enough to do so. So now he walked straight towards them. When he was sufficiently near he perceived that they suddenly stopped their conversation. Hannele blushed even; and one of Honza's cheeks became swollen—for it concealed a mouthful of *barches* which he had not had time to swallow. As if Moschele knew nothing of the tribute which his sister was accustomed to offer to Honza! Some malicious demon told Moschele to remain, although his reception was not of an en-

couraging nature. Neither of them addressed a word to him. Then, as if to be revenged, Moschele placed himself right in front of the cross to annoy them all the more. But that did not last long. A new and very different object engaged his attention.

He had before him the Saviour on the cross.

Born in the village, where generally a tolerant spirit prevails, the young boy knew nothing of certain ideas proceeding from the ghetto. The Saviour was badly painted. Nevertheless Moschele felt a sort of pity for His divine sufferings. That head bent by death; those darkened eyes; those nails driven in the hands and feet, from which fell drops of blood—all these caused him a sort of shudder. But what above all fixed his eyes were the four Latin capitals inscribed above the Crucified One. They seemed to him full of mystery; and scarcely aware himself of the emotion which he was experiencing, he said in an undertone—

"I wish I knew what I N R J on the tin plate meant."

"I can tell you," cried Honza, without hesitation.

He had come to the end of the *barches* without accident. Hannele and Moschele looked at him intently. In the whole world there was certainly never god nor king before whom two souls bowed

more respectfully than did now the children of the Randar before Honza's erudition.

"It is Latin," said Honza.

"Latin?" repeated Moschele.

"If you don't like to believe me," protested Honza, "ask the priest the next time you see him."

But, my dear Honza, why this protest? They no more doubt you than you yourself doubt the infallibility of your Pope. He then began to explain to them first of all the signification of each capital letter. Then he pronounced one after the other the four words of the dead language, and translated them into Bohemian, in which language they signified, "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews."

These words penetrated the soul of Moschele like a beneficent rain falling into the bosom of the earth which absorbs it. They were soon to give fruit. In the evening, at the ceremony of the *Habdala*, when in a symbolical manner the Sabbath is separated from the week about to begin, Moschele had become silent and thoughtful. On most occasions he disputed with Hannele as to which of the two should hold the wax-light that their father, after the benediction, extinguished in wine. This time he did not care to hold the light. Rebb Schmull began the ceremony with his salutation, "Good week." Then he

pronounced in Hebrew a long benedictory formula both on the wine and on the box of spices, which together represent the perfume and the joys of the departing Sabbath. He afterwards spilled on the table some drops of wine, in which he extinguished the light. Then the box of spices was passed round for every one to inhale its scent. When at last it was Moschele's turn he was not aware of it, and Hannele rubbed it against his nose to bring him to his senses. The father had gone back to the inn; but the mother was putting away the Sabbath clothes in a large chest. At this moment Moschele advanced quietly towards her and took her by the hand.

"What do you want?" she said.

"Did Moses understand Latin?" .

"What a question!" replied the Randar's wife, in her innocence; "was there anything in the world he did not know? Has not the Rabbi told you that God Himself taught him; and, taught by God, must he not have understood everything?"

As she uttered these words, so full of sense, Moschele looked earnestly at his mother. The child seemed much affected, although the Randar's wife had only spoken as she had done from an obscure sort of instinct.

"In that case, does God teach Honza?" he said, after a few minutes' silence.

"What makes you think of such a thing?" asked the mother, smiling.

"Because he also understands Latin."

"Little stupid, does not the priest teach him?"

"And who taught the priest?"

"He has been through his fourteen classes. Of course he understands Latin."

Then Moschele, passing rapidly, after the manner of children, from one idea to another, said—

"Can every one know what the Rabbi and Honza know?"

"Even they do not know very much," replied the prudent mother; "and the priest himself has many more things to learn before he will know everything."

"Could not I learn what they have learnt?"

"What! do you also wish to study?" cried the mother, from the bottom of her soul; and, trembling with joy, she pressed the child against her heart. How happy she was! It appeared as though she would extinguish with her kisses Moschele's whole soul, which with a sort of happy presentiment seemed to feel itself attracted by the light of knowledge. The Randar's wife wept and laughed at the same time, and uttered words which came not from her head, but were inspired by the joyful pride of her maternal heart. Why

were there no geniuses at hand obliging enough to bear on their rapid wings across sea and land these great tidings—that Moschele wished to study seriously?

She hurried to the inn to tell her husband; but one glance was sufficient to convince her that the moment was not a favourable one. The Randar was seated in the midst of the peasants and engaged in making a long speech on the subject of rather an insignificant quarrel between two tipplers. This sight rendered the mother sad, and she experienced a feeling of bitterness against her husband. But it soon left her; joy can tolerate no bitterness near it.

She came slowly back, and passing through the kitchen saw old Chane by the light of a blazing fire preparing the evening meal. She stopped just in front of the flame, which lighted up her sweet face like a heavenly glory. The old cook was just placing a saucepan full of water on the fire.

"Have I told you, Chane," said the Randar's wife, "that our dear Moschele wishes to go to school?"

From the cook's mouth the last words fell again as the rain falls a second time from a water pipe —for she was deaf.

"Wants to go to school," said the cook.

"He wants to learn Latin," continued the Randar's wife. "He wants to study seriously; and he will become a learned man."

"Will become a learned man," said the echo.

"I only wish to live until he is made doctor. Why I desire it so much is chiefly on account of our officials and our peasants. They think their children alone are capable of learning. But it will cost money."

"It will cost money," repeated the deaf woman.

Now only did the Randar's wife see to whom she had been confiding her joy.

"But you do not hear me, Chane," she continued; "I might as well speak to this saucepan of water on the fire."

We have no time to pass the night which followed that evening at the end of the Randar's bed. We will only say that this night was made up of prayers and hopes.

The next day the Randar's wife was joyous with a confirmed joy. She was firmly resolved to speak to her husband at once; only she did not know exactly how to begin. What a storm she would raise in the house, and from the mere thought of it she suffered cruelly. She shed her tears in secret.

It was the afternoon. Standing at the outer door she was reflecting on the whole matter. She

was praying God in the open street to make her succeed in her projects. She saw the wife of the peasant Waczlaw go by on her way to the statue of St. John Nepomucene.

"She is doubtless going to pray for her Honza," thought the Randar's wife; and her entire soul went with the peasant woman, whose views, will, and faith she for the moment shared.

Suddenly was heard the rolling of a carriage, still concealed by clouds of dust. When the carriage came nearer, the Randar's wife saw that the occupant was the Count in person. She became seized with a respectful fright.

Do not imagine either on one side or the other any touching scene—the result of passions long since dead. All is over: for both have grown old.

"Good-morning, Frau Rachel," said the Count, as he stepped out of the carriage.

"Excellency," she stammered, quite confused, and she went up to him to kiss his hand.

"It is a long time, is it not, since I have been to see you?" said the proprietor. "I want to look over the distillery. How is Herr Rothschild?"

He meant the Randar.

"Quite well, Excellency."

"And you, Frau Rachel?"

"Quite well also. Your Excellency is too kind."

"You have been crying, Madame Rachel. May I ask the reason?"

The Randar's wife hesitated.

"I am vexed," she replied, after some moments' silence.

"And why, Frau Rachel? As far as I know, you have no domestic troubles."

"It is difficult to tell you, Excellency," answered the Randar's wife, with a painful smile.

"Why so?"

"It is quite a family affair."

"And you will not tell me?" asked the Count.

"It is about the children."

"Do they give you trouble? That is indeed sad."

"My children are very good, thank Heaven," replied the Randar's wife, who had quite understood the meaning of the Count's words. "But my Moritz"—she was ashamed to call him by his true name—"would like to become a doctor."

"Your little boy?" asked the Count, with a laugh.

"And my husband will not hear of it. He thinks the child knows quite enough, and that if he studies too much he will no longer be a good Jew. But I want him to study. It will cost a good deal of money no doubt, and my husband is opposed to it."

"On account of the money?"

"Oh no, Excellency; on religious grounds."

"Nonsense," replied the Count; "a little smattering of Latin will not make him unfaithful to your Moses. I will speak about it to your husband. Rely on me, Frau Rachel."

The Randar had now come forward, making a multiplicity of bows by way of salutation. The Count received his Rothschild with a pleasant smile, and begged him to take him through the distilleries, which he had come to see. The Randar's wife followed them a little way, but did not go inside the distilleries. There in the midst of fumes given out by the tubs of brandy—there, then, was to be decided the fate of her child. From this building, where bad spirits were manufactured, was to come forth this future, either in the form of an angel with shining wings, or in that of a dwarf. How was she to find out? A year—that is to say, half an hour—had passed when the Count came out of the distillery accompanied by the Randar. She studied the face of his Excellency, but could read nothing in it. Was she to hope, or to lose all courage?

The carriage left the village. Had the Count kept his word? It will, perhaps, be thought strange, but the Randar's wife saw with plea-

sure that throughout the day her husband did nothing but grumble.

"He must have spoken to him about it," she said to herself; and though she knew that her project as to her child's studies was now no longer any secret to her husband, she yet did not feel that she had enough courage to speak to him openly about it. She wished to leave the initiative to him.

"He is the father," she said; "it is for him to begin."

At night Moschele, though he had been some time in bed, could not sleep. There were still lights in the sitting-room, and the father and mother were still wakeful. They sat down without saying a word at a table opposite one another. The Randar was counting money with his credit book before him.

"Pawel Kratochfil must have no more credit," he said, after some moments' silence; "he owes too much."

"Very well," said the Randar's wife in a low voice.

Then there was another pause. Rebb Schmull was only counting money in order to hide his embarrassment. He made several mistakes, and put away the silver pieces in an evident bad-humour.

"Rachel," he said at length in an undertone.

"Schmull," she replied, also in an undertone.

And for some minutes yet they remained seated face to face without saying a word.

"To-morrow, send to Münchengratz for the tailor Rebb Jizcheck to come and measure Moschele."

"He has enough clothes already," replied the Randar's wife with feminine cleverness; but her heart was agitated like an ocean.

"His clothes will only do for the village," replied the Randar.

"Where is he going then?" asked Rachel in an indescribable tone.

"To Bunzlau," said Rebb Schmull, getting up and turning away. "We must send him to school. The Count spoke to me about it to-day."

"Schmull! Schmull!" cried the Randar's wife, "are you serious?"

The husband and wife remained seated together until an advanced hour of the night talking of the future of their child. And now that once again they had but one soul, their hearts were in accord like well-tuned instruments. One thought, nevertheless, preoccupied the Randar's wife throughout the night.

"If the Count had not proposed it, would he have done it in order to please me?" she asked herself.

The next day Moschele was awakened by a kiss from his mother.

"Be quick, Moschele," she said; "dress yourself and say your prayers; and for God's sake omit

nothing. I will tell you afterwards something that will please you."

Moschele did as he was bidden. But just as he was saying his prayers it seemed to him that he had already heard something about what was to give him so much pleasure. When he had finished his prayers Jizchech the tailor arrived from Münchengratz. He took the child's measure for a pair of trousers, a coat, and a waistcoat. The Randar paid the tailor immediately in good ready money to enable him to buy the cloth and other things of which he had need. Moschele did not know what to think of it all.

Nor were his intellectual garments forgotten. Rebb Schmull wrote without loss of time to one of his friends at Prague, begging him to send on by the first conveyance a master of proved ability. He offered for the summer term alone 200 florins with board and lodging. The master came, and began to prepare Moschele for his examination in the German language, for in the month of October he was to go to Bunzlau. There the horizon of a new world would open to him.

V.—The Distribution of Prizes.

In entering on the books the name of the new student the rector of Bunzlau asked the Randar's wife what name she proposed to give to her son;

if she wished him to be called Moses or Moritz, it being indifferent to him which name the child bore. The Randar's wife decided for the latter, as being the least Jewish. We record the fact, however painful it may be to our feelings. The rector entered him under the Latin name of Mauritius; and it is thus that beneath its equivalent in the German language we shall henceforth designate the late Moschele

Such a change of name as this is more important than may be thought, and was to turn our Moschele into a new man.

Moritz was put to board with Salme Floh, who kept beneath the arcades of Bunzlau a clothes shop. Already Moritz began to put his parents to expense.

The story of our student's adventures on the first day of his entering the school may easily be told. He suffered enormously by reason of his religion. The word "Jew, Jew," was cast at him from all sides. To avoid this mockery he took his place on the last form, where was seated a little boy with pale sickly features, near whom the others did not care to be. During the prayers, which were said every day before and after the lessons, Moritz while the others stood up remained seated. Probably some vague instinct told him not to give his assent to a hostile religion. But immediately after the prayers the professor told

him that he must understand once for all that during the prayers the Jews must stand up like the other boys; that they were of course not obliged to pray, because it was impossible to make them do so, but that in any case they could not remain seated, and that while standing up they must concentrate their thoughts on some subject which would bring them nearer to God.

Moritz considered these observations of the rector's quite right, as indeed they were. He resolved to follow them to the letter. He could not decide at first to what prayer in the *siderl* he should turn his thoughts under these circumstances. He ended by fixing upon the "Schmah Isroel." Strange that this "Hear, O Israel, God, thy God, is God eternal," this one God, jealous of His unity, was now to be invoked side by side with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost! In the afternoon, when the boys were preparing to rush out, the professor said—

"Who will serve * to-morrow?"

Nearly every hand was raised, and from all sides cries were heard of—

"I," "I!"

Moritz, who thought that as a member of the school this concerned him also, cried out like the others. The rector happened to remark it.

* *i.e.*, assist the priest during mass.

"Moritz," he said with a laugh, "wishes to serve. But this is not your affair, my boy. You may do so of course in the synagogue if you like."

This pleasantry on the part of the professor was followed by a dreadful burst of laughter. Moritz remained dumb with fright and shame.

"Oh, you want to serve, do you?" the boys called out to him on all sides when they were out of school.

Poor Moritz passed through the ranks as though he were running the gauntlet, and went home in tears.

Another adventure which happened to Moritz on the fourth day of his student's career must also be mentioned.

His landlady had been late with his breakfast, and in consequence of this neglect he did not get to school until five minutes after the professor's arrival.

Moritz was to expiate bitterly this infraction of the rules. From his place of authority the professor ordered him to go down on his knees. Moritz burst into tears, and begged the professor to forgive him this once. But in vain. Then he cried out from the bottom of his soul—

"I am forbidden, reverend father, to kneel."

The rector would not listen to him, and in his anger said to him—

"In that case you will be sent to prison."

Thereupon Moritz knelt down.

It was indeed forbidden to him to go down on his knees; he told no falsehood in saying so. Let us here ask whether it would not be right to require that each professor, even were he a clergyman, as was the case at Bunzlau, should know the condition of the soul of each of his pupils, as the botanist knows the stamen of every flower. Often the scissors which should only crop off some wild outgrowths cut with blind fury into the very roots of life. The prejudices of children are dealt with as if they were weeds, though they may contain precious sap essential to their being. How many masters, especially in our Germany, which always places priests in the professor's chair, behave in this respect like moral Vandals. In their dense ignorance of things, they destroy, so to say, the treasures contained in the conscience of their pupils; and how many souls, thanks thereto, lose for ever their holy perfume? Fortunately our Moritz was too well endowed by nature to succumb to the trials through which he had to pass. In all cases, moreover, the spiritual nature asserts itself in the man under the most difficult circumstances, and triumphs in the end over the mockery and contempt of the most determined enemies.

It so happened that on the following Wednesday the compositions had to be given back to the boys which they had written and submitted to the professor a week before. Moritz's was the best; and the voice of the professor informing him that he was named first monitor, seemed to him a voice from heaven. Who would dare to envy the triumph of the poor boy who now quitted his place by the side of his feeble little fellow-pupil to ascend the throne of the class and wield the sceptre? In his capacity of first monitor, Moritz was in the school what his father was in the village—that is to say, the most important personage. All the exercises passed through his hands. He had to watch over the morality of all the boys—delicate and painful duties it must be admitted; for he had to point out every fault, every infraction of a rule to the professor, who, by way of punishment, ordered with the greatest coolness that the task of the day should be copied out so many times. In this way Moritz acquired unlimited power. He was in a position to injure; and the mockery formerly directed against the Jew disappeared in presence of his monitorial office. Children in this respect are like grown-up men. The boys now began to pay him court, which often caused him great difficulties in the matter of conscience. On the one hand he had to watch faithfully over his

master's flock; on the other his flattered vanity invited him to pass over in silence the fault of some stray sheep. But above all things he aimed at being popular; a desire which has heated the brain of more than one man without his being precisely a monitor as was our Moritz.

He had, for the rest, in his fellow-villager Honza, a dangerous rival. Honza was the second monitor and consequently the nearest to the throne. It often happened that, thanks to some composition more correct than that of Moritz, he brought him down from his grandeur for a time. But soon afterwards Moritz ascended anew to the first place and enjoyed his honours as before.

In spite of this, Honza at bottom showed himself almost always his superior. He studied more assiduously and more deeply than Moritz. If a literal translation had to be done, Honza's was always the best. But Moritz, on the other hand, beat him in sums and geography.

For some time past Honza had ceased to be the idol before which our young student, when he was called Moschele, used to bow with dumb devotion. As Abraham broke his father Therach's images of clay which give them food and drink, so Moritz took from his former ideal the chimerical garments with which he had been pleased to clothe him. First he took off the episcopal mitre, then the

cloak, and finally the shining cross of gold. At last he saw before him, in its simplest expression, nothing but the peasant's son.

That is what comes from learning on the same benches the verb *amo*.

For the rest the two village boys were on the best terms. Moritz did not get one letter from home in which Honza was not mentioned. From time to time he received all kinds of delicacies, cakes, fruit or patties; and never in these cases did the Randar's wife omit to say in her letter, "Mind you give some to young Waczlaw." In Hannele's letters there was always a little postscript of which the eternal refrain was "Remember me to Honza." Moritz never failed to fulfil both injunctions, and it would be difficult to say whether the extraordinary joy experienced each time by Honza had its origin in the good things given to him, or in Hannele's kind words. Once, however, a doubt arose in his mind, and he wished to know whether the letter really contained, "Give my compliments to Honza." He thought that Moritz might tell him so without the words being actually written. Moritz protested in the most solemn manner. But still Honza shook his head in an incredulous manner. Wounded by this want of confidence Moritz handed him the letter. "Here," he said, "read it yourself."

It was impossible, however, for Honza to read it, the letter being written in Hebrew characters. He had scarcely cast his eyes on the writing when he cried out in a rage: "Do you think I can make out that scribble?" Moritz saw what a mistake he had committed, and to calm Honza, proposed to teach him the Jewish characters. At last his desire to be able to read for himself Hannele's compliments was stronger than his scruples, and he consented. Moritz then prepared, not without trouble, a Hebrew alphabet, above which he wrote the corresponding German letters; and in the class, before all the boys, he handed this masterpiece of caligraphy to his village friend. During the entire week with inexhaustible patience Honza did nothing but draw the hooks of the Jewish scribble, until at last he had overcome all difficulties, though meanwhile he had neglected several of his lessons. Fortunately chance had raised Moritz into a power; otherwise it would have been worse for Honza. Moritz took care not to tell the professor that Honza had given him no exercise. The Thursday following the postman brought more delicacies, accompanied by a letter. Honza was present when he arrived, and Moritz shared with him as he always did the cakes and the compliments. "Let me see," said Honza. Moritz handed him the letter. Honza's cheeks became suffused with blushes when he saw in all their

reality these words in Hannele's own writing, "Remember me to Honza."

He was fully convinced.

A year had now passed. In a few days the distribution of prizes was to take place. They both awaited the event with impatience, their hearts inundated as with a heavenly joy. For the first prize was to be given either to Moritz or to Honza. The greater number of the boys had backed Moritz. But at the same time a few evil tongues whispered here and there that the first place in the school was actually about to be given to a Jew!

Let us pardon both the boys, if, intoxicated with the perfumes of their approaching success, they drank too copiously the cup of happiness. Every one knows that children drink from the cask, rather than from the bottle. For some weeks their conversation had turned upon nothing but the examination. Each thought himself reserved for the honour of the first prize; and they had now no more serious occupation than to prepare themselves to receive it in a suitable manner. They had learnt from older boys how they would be expected to behave when they were called up; and they studied with the greatest ardour the formal bows which they would have to make before the bust of the Emperor, the Mayor, and his reverence the Rector. In their rehearsals an old *nisrach* stood for the Emperor, a dilapidated

chest for the Mayor, and a petticoat belonging to Moritz's landlady for his reverence the Rector.

Although it was still a week from the prize day, both of them felt inspired by a devout feeling of expectation. The event seemed no longer in the future. Moritz at this moment thought of the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai, awaiting in pious silence the moment of revelation. He also was to have his revelation.

On the eve of the great day, an incident took place which caused a terrible impression to both the youths. The printer had to keep secret the list of places until the day came for making them known officially. And woe to him who sought to raise the veil! Nevertheless a rich student belonging to the upper classes could not wait a day longer to hear his fate, and resolved to abridge the time. For a good round sum he succeeded in purchasing a proof of the programme from the compositor. Proud possessor of this document he imprudently invited several of his friends to assist beforehand at a mock distribution of prizes. But hardly had the first act of the comedy been begun, when suddenly the door opened, and in walked the Rector. "Rascals, scoundrels and *nebulones*," he exclaimed, "is this how you respect the laws?" As the malefactors had been discovered *in flagrante delicto* there was nothing to do but to award punishment. The rich student was lowered to the second class.

It was necessary to make an example. The others got off with a severe fright.

At the news of so terrible an offence, Moritz and Honza felt as though they themselves had been struck by the axe of justice, and for the first time they saw the State, beneath the form of a man armed at all points, place its iron hand on a guilty head.

The Randar's wife and Hannele arrived the first thing in the morning. They wanted to assist personally at the triumph; for, Moritz it must be said, constituting himself his own panegyrist, had not failed to sound in his letters the trumpets of his coming glory.

Accompanied by his mother and Hannele, together with the couple at whose house he lodged, Moritz, full of silent emotion, walked towards the college. Just as he entered the bells were beginning to ring in token of the approaching *Te Deum*. The relations and friends of the students were arriving in shoals from all sides. The bustle and noise were extraordinary. The students in "rhetoric" might be distinguished among all the others. In a year they would leave the college. But already they gave themselves the airs of "philosophers" who have done with study. During the religious service Moritz took his party over the college of which all the most secret recesses were familiar to him. First he showed them the re-

fectory where the reverend professors dined. Then he passed to the kitchen, whence the most delicate odours proceeded. But his landlord, Salme Floh, wished to return. He looked upon it as a sin to titillate the olfactory membrane with perfumes of this kind. Moritz did not forget the head-master's private apartments; and on reaching the door he respectfully took off his hat. At last he conducted them to the great hall where the prizes were to be distributed. On the walls were suspended the portraits of all the benefactors of the monastery to which the college appertained. He once more uncovered himself before the portrait of St. John of Callasany, explaining to his mother that he was the founder of "their order." Here, however, Salme Floh turned away with a sort of horror. For to see the young man stand with uncovered head before this portrait, was to him an abomination. The service was at last at an end. The hall was full of students. The Mayor, together with the professors took his place, the distribution was begun. First of all, however, an orator had pronounced from the height of the tribune a speech adorned with all the necessary metaphors and flowers of rhetoric The speech lasted a great deal too long; and each time the "first prize" was called up the trumpets and cymbals resounded. So it went on until the last class was reached—that to which our Moritz belonged. The "first

prize" was called up—it was not our Moritz, but another of our acquaintances; I mean Honza. Moritz had gained no prize—only in all the faculties he had been marked "eminens." After this solemn scene Moritz sought his mother on all sides. As soon as he found her he wept aloud. He himself had led her into error. Rachel consoled him as well as she could. But she herself had need of consolation. "It is not enough," she said, "for you to be *eminent*."

"I would bet my soul," cried Salme, "that he deserved the first prize a thousand times more than that young peasant. But as unfortunately he is a Jew: and as we live under *goles** they would not give it him. Believe me, madam, they have not the courage to make a Jewish child step forward to the sound of trumpets and cymbals. As such a thing would give pleasure to the Jews they for that very reason refuse to do it; and when I think of it, I cannot indeed blame them. In Moritz's class there are forty boys; and you think it likely that they would let him carry off the first prize? Upon my life that would be too much; they would feel the disgrace too keenly."

Give to an individual affliction a general cause and it can be more easily supported. Salme's philosophical explanations were not without their effect: Moritz and his mother were somewhat con-

* Oppression.

soled. Perhaps Moritz reflected that his sorrows were not of yesterday or to-day, but that they dated from the willows of Babylon.

In the afternoon, when the Randar's wife had settled with Moritz's landlady her account for board and lodging, she started on her return journey to the village. At the "Golden Crown" inn, where the carriage was in waiting, Hannelè wanted Honza to be sent for. But the Randar's wife was in a hurry to be off. Every minute she passed in the town made her remember that her child had not gained a prize.

During the journey the grief of disappointment awoke anew in Moritz's breast. He wept bitterly: and the poor mother, her own heart full of sorrow, was unable to calm him. "It all comes," she kept repeating, "from our *goles*. If you were not a Jew, it would have been very different." They were still not far from Münchengratz, when suddenly Hannele rose and cried out, "Why, there is Honza!" With her piercing eyes she had discovered on the road a traveller who was about two hundred paces in advance of them.

It was indeed Honza. He was strangely accoutred. To be able to walk more easily he had taken off his boots, which he was carrying on his shoulders at the end of a stick. In the other hand he held a book bound in red morocco, out of which he read with avidity as he walked along. He was not

doing this by way of killing time: the book was his first prize. Just as the carriage passed beside him and he perceived the Randar's wife, he stopped in great confusion. Hannele called to him to get up; there was room for him. Honza was standing irresolute, when the Randar's wife herself invited him to get into the carriage. As soon as Moritz saw the book given as first prize in Honza's hands, he threw himself sobbing on to his mother's bosom and remained in this position until they reached home. It was already night when they entered the village. Arriving at his father's house, Honza jumped out of the carriage. He scarcely thanked the Randar's wife, and did not even say good-night.

There were still lights in the house.

"Waczlaw's wife," said Rachel to herself, "will be very pleased. Why are such joys denied to Jewish women? Are they to suffer in everything?"

"Well, what did our Moschele get?" asked Rebb Schmull, after the first salutations had been exchanged.

"Nothing at all," said the Randar's wife, "because he is a Jew."

Moritz showed his father a copy of the programme.

"What is the meaning of this word 'em' put everywhere by the side of your name?" he asked.

"It means 'eminens,'" replied Moritz; "distinguished."

"What do you want more?" said the easy-going Rebb Schmull. "Is not that enough for a Jew?"

Then he remarked that under the rubric "religion" nothing was written.

"Why is there nothing here?"

"Because," replied Moritz, "I have not learnt religion.".

"That is not well," said the Randar, shaking his head. "But I shall easily be able to tell whether you still have any religion."

Thereupon supper was served. At the end of the meal Rebb Schmull said to Moritz—

"Now prove to me that you are still a Jew. *Benche* aloud; I want to see if you have forgotten anything."

Moritz did so, and to his father's entire satisfaction. When, fatigued as he was, Moritz went to his bedroom and threw off his clothes, the Randar made another experiment, and coming to him said—

"My son, I am not yet convinced; show me your *Arbeh-Kanfes.*"

Moritz, with a laugh, removed this sort of scarf and presented it to his father, who went to the light and examined it minutely to see if the *zigehs** were still in order. He unrolled them

* Woollen threads.

one after the other, and put each of them, upon finding it in good condition, back into the pockets at the corners of the *Arbeh-Kanfes*. Meanwhile Moritz had got into bed.

"And now," said the indefatigable Rebb Schmull "repeat to me aloud your evening prayer. After that I will leave you."

In vain did the Randar's wife beg her husband to let the child alone for that day; was he not tired enough? Rebb Schmull was intractable.

So Moritz began to mutter the evening prayer; the Randar followed him attentively to see if he made any mistake. But before the student arrived at this passage: "On my right is the angel Michael, on my left the angel Gabriel; before me stands Raphael, behind me Uriel, and above] me the majesty of God," his eyes had closed; he slept soundly.

"Study has done him no harm," said the Randar in a low voice to Rachel; "he is still the same as in the past."

The mother's heart bounded with joy; had she not what she desired? *He* was satisfied.

VI.—Two Existences.

In spite of his father's opinion, Moritz was no longer the Moschele of the past. The Randar's eyes were not precisely of the kind which

penetrate to the secrets of the heart. Doubtless he might be able to judge the condition of his *Arbeh-Kanfes,* and ascertain whether Moritz had forgotten his evening prayer without perceiving in the least the changes which had taken place at the bottom of his young soul.

Strange to say, it was only now that Moritz began really to love the village. Although born and brought up among peasants he had, as we have seen, been kept almost entirely from contact with them. We know, moreover, what motives had actuated his parents in this matter. Now that he was becoming a young man more liberty was allowed him. The Randar believed that henceforth his studies would protect him from all rustic rudeness.

Moritz profited by this liberty to observe freely what went on around him with a view to self-instruction.

It was the harvest season. The golden corn was being cut in his father's fields as everywhere else. So he went into the country among the harvesters. It may seem strange, but Moritz had never before in his life taken part in harvesting. Honza went too.

The pranks of the girls, the jealous courtship of the village youths, the wheat arranged in sheaves all over the fields, the carts which trembled under their loads as they went along—these things put Moritz in such a joyous humour that he felt he

must rush forward to join in and sing like every one else. But he did not; his old education had still too great an influence over him.

Moritz could behold there at the same time the fruit and the maledictions, the profit and the pain with which the earth simultaneously presents those who take her gifts. It was not without a deep sentiment of pity that he saw the peasant, scorched by a burning sun and brandishing his sickle, perform the laborious duties of agriculture. When he observed him wipe the perspiration from his brow with his shirt sleeve, Moritz himself felt oppressed by the heat. Often the desire seized him to run straight home to the village, go down into his father's cellar, and draw can-fulls of fresh beer to take to those working in the fields. Many things explained themselves to him, and he vaguely understood why the peasants *drank so much!*

"It must be admitted," he said to himself one day when absorbed by one of his rustic ideas, "it must be admitted that my father and mother are fortunate. They have no need to toil like the peasants. How glad I am, too, that my father is a Randar; he can at least give the peasants drink. What would become of them without my father? The peasant labours and my father supplies him with drink. They are necessary one to another. One thing alone I regret, that the drink is not supplied *gratis*. The Emperor ought to require

this. Whoever does not work has no thirst. I can now understand why my father never drinks more than a pint. If he takes more he gets a headache, he says. Would he say this if he worked in the fields?"

Moritz remembered too that his father was far less uneasy than the peasants when slight or heavy hailstorms threatened the fields. How was this? Then he wondered why on his father's land the men and lads who gathered in the harvest sang neither so loudly nor so gaily as others. He found the reason to be that this land did not belong to his father in his own right.

"He cannot, after all, rejoice like the peasant who has cultivated, sown, and harvested himself. My father is obliged to pay rent for his land to the Count; only what remains to him after having done this is his. It is like a student copying his task from another. Can he taste the joy of the one who does his own work?"

At the commencement of her brother's studies Hannele had begun to serve in the tavern. The Rabbi's lessons had long since been given up. The father insisted rigorously upon Hannele's at least taking part in the business as the valuable services of Moritz were lost to it. She had then to debit customers' beer and brandy, pay people, and do the duties of a housekeeper. Moritz envied her these functions; did she not serve drink

to the peasants? On the other hand he suffered cruelly when hearing his father and mother talk of the peasants, above all as they made up the accounts, the Randar named, in their order, those to whom credit was to be refused, and those to whom it was to be given.

"So," he thought, "they will get no more drink!" and the peasants who made up this class seemed to him indeed deserving of pity.

But one day when his mother sent some nice broth to the sick child of a peasant woman, Moritz rejoiced infinitely and expressed his joy in words. The mother attributed it to his good heart; but it came from a deeper, a much deeper source.

On returning to Bunzlau, the ghetto produced on him the effect of a tomb. He needed time to get used once more to this life. Compared with the impetuous movements of the ghetto, its business cries and traffic of all kinds, his native village, with its calm and its placidity, seemed to him like one of the Fortunate Islands. Among the noises of the various active professions in the ghetto there were certain false notes which grated terribly on his ears. He now found that the loudest hubbubs which took place in his father's tavern were much less disagreeable.

"These people," he said to himself from time to time, "are not drunk, and yet they have this effect upon me."

Whenever he reflected thus he became deeply agitated.

When in such a state of mind he was always made the object of considerable raillery on the part of his host and hostess; it was Salme, above all, that very dry man, who seemed to make a target of him.

"There he is, still in a state of uneasiness," he said one day when Moritz was more affected than usual. "Why doesn't he come to the table? His uneasiness will pass away. You had better give the child a sucking bottle; I have no doubt he would rather live with his peasants than among Jews. There is nothing to be wondered at in that. Nature always comes out."

These ironical remarks did not wound our Moritz so much as they irritated him.

"And why not," he said with flushed cheeks; "is the peasant then not a man?"

"Not a man?" asked Salme with a loud burst of laughter. "Who said that? The peasant is a man like you and me; he has two hands, two feet, and two eyes. But do you not prefer a single Jewish soul to a whole village of peasants?"

"I am thinking," said Moritz, after a few moments' hesitation.

"You are thinking, and hesitate to reply?" cried Salme violently. "There is the student. Because he has poked his nose a little into books, and goes

outside to a school under *galaches*,* he is already convinced that a Jew is not worth more than a red farthing, and my reply, Mr. Student, is that if it is for that you study, your books had better at once be thrown into the fire; they are utterly worthless."

Without suspecting it, rude, frank Salme had struck Moritz precisely at a spot where he was vulnerable.

Moritz was not yet built up; and by his religious ideas, the result of his education, he was still too much influenced to perceive the theological art used by Salme, who had just transported a question which was quite ordinary into the domain of religion. More frightened than convinced Moritz lowered his eyes.

Salme Floh, conscious of his victory, continued, though in more moderate terms—

"You need not feel sorry at what I have just said. It does not affect you in any way; you are a good boy, and never go to your class without having first said your prayers. But these learned men, if they were allowed, would change us Jews, according to their fancy. It must be admitted, alas, that they are every day becoming more influential; and if we are not careful they will take away the little of the *Thora* which still remains to

* Ecclesiastics.

us. We common people may be said to possess nothing but this piece of the *Thora;* well, they have but one desire, which is to forbid us to use it. We are a stumbling-block in their path, I say, as I think that we live in bad times. I give money like every other *balbos** to have my children properly instructed at school; for now-a-days one must know how to read, write, and calculate. But all that is not enough for our learned men; they have other designs; and so, for example, we have as chief of our community Rebb Schlomeh Blumenfeld, who, because for some thirty years he has read books, would like us to make our children masons and carpenters. What do you think of that?"

Maurice did not suspect the danger Salme saw in following these trades. The trowel and the hatchet seemed to him very inoffensive. So he asked naïvely—

"Would that then be such a dreadful thing?"

Salme stared at the boy.

"Is there a Thoumme† in your village?" he inquired, after a long pause.

"Certainly."

"It is doubtless surmounted by a tower."

"A large, handsome tower with a bell inside."

"Well, and has this tower never needed repairing?"

* Father of a family. † Church.

"During my last stay at home they covered the roof with shingle."

"And among the workman there was of course a Jew? Why not?"

"What an idea, Rebb Salme."

"Well, then, Mr. Student," cried Salme, whose triumphant voice resounded like the trumpets of Jericho, "was I right or wrong in saying that the Jew cannot and ought not to become either a mason or a carpenter? Do you think then, seriously, that it is permitted to a Jew to demean himself on a tower and to play thus unworthily with the life which he holds from his Maker? Ah, I should like to see the Jewish woman who would consent to eat the bread her husband earned in this manner; or the one who would be courageous enough to stand below and look at her husband engaged in employment which exposed him to death at least ten times a day. *Schmah Isroel!* It is a profession like this which they would have me teach my child!"

These words produced an indescribable impression upon Moritz. He saw that Rebb Salme was right and wrong at the same time. Had Salme spoken in this way from pure sensibility? Be this as it may, the boy found nothing to reply.

Over the way was the butcher's. By mere chance it happened that an ox had just been thrown down with a view to slaughter, and the

sound of its dying bellows penetrated, bringing trouble with it, into the room where they were sitting. It was like a ray of sunlight thrown into Moritz's soul.

"Well," said Moritz, after a while, "since it is forbidden to the Jew to become a mason or a carpenter, why does he make himself a butcher? Is it not as hurtful to trade in blood as in mortar or wood?"

Salme looked at the little boy with astonishment. This was an insidious question, and he did not know too well how to answer.

"On my life," he exclaimed, "you have some wit, and if it is a *gallech** who has taught you this, the argument is perfect. But what would you desire, Moritz?" he continued after some moments' reflection; "man is obliged to eat meat."

This reason did not appear satisfactory to our Moritz. So he replied—

"That is no reason; for if the Almighty had not created oxen"—

"We should not want butchers," said Salme, laughing very loudly. He was now happy to turn on the little boy the ice water of his pleasantry.

"That is not my meaning," replied Moritz, annoyed. "Men need to be housed as they need to eat meat; therefore the Almighty wished them to become carpenters and masons."

* Ecclesiastic.

Salme's turn had once more come to be surprised.

"On my life," he cried, "you are right. This shows what one may expect who makes his child study. For my own part, I avow that ideas of this kind never enter my head. But listen, I want to make to you on this subject a remark by which you will be able to profit. One day I took part in a Talmudic discussion at Rebb Mendel Bondi's house. There I heard, you can believe me, that we may read in the *Gemara* how centuries ago butchers and tanners passed for contemptible persons, and were consequently obliged to live outside at some distance from the community; the former because they dealt in blood, the latter because they handled skins. So you see our holy Thora has foreseen and replied to everything."

Reciprocally surprised and astonished, Salme and the student put an end to this conversation, abounding in grave and difficult questions. They separated full of esteem for one another; Moritz respected in his host a Talmudic knowledge which he should never have suspected him to possess; Salme respected the little boy so full of wit, and who learned his wisdom from a *gallech*.

Mendel Wilna was right when long since he had compared the child's future life to a copybook in which a great number of men were to write. Salme Floh was one of those who wrote in it.

It was only now that Moritz found himself altogether comfortable and at home in Salme's house.

But from this time, too, dangerous doubts began to shake the doors of his young soul. Moritz had many occasions to observe in those with whom he lodged pains and sufferings of quite a different kind from those which had excited his compassion in the village. Under his host's roof he soon got to know all the tribulations of a Jewish household in the ghetto. He often suffered profoundly when he saw with what toil the poor people gained their livelihood. His hostess kept an old clothes shop in the arcades. Frequently on returning home in the evening her visage was sad as rain—she had sold nothing.

At the beginning of each week both husband and wife were a prey to mortal anguish; some one else might by offering a higher sum have rented their shop in the arcades. Their happiness knew no bounds when they found that the landlord had increased the rent by a few florins only. As for Salme he wandered whole days in the town and its environs to buy old garments. Then tired out he brought back a gigantic bag, which he had been obliged to carry on his back several leagues of the way.

Disgust often took possession of our Moritz, who was accustomed to the ease of his parents, when he saw some of the articles taken out of the bag

to be exposed; they were clothes half worn out, with holes in them—vile, disgusting merchandise. When such old clothes as these had been piled up, Salme sat down and with incredible activity endeavoured to restore to them what lustre he could. His genius in this respect was immense. To make of an old torn pair of breeches two pairs of children's trousers, to introduce the part containing a hole into a coat sleeve so as to impose upon the purchaser, to bring back to newness a crushed hat—all this did not cost him the least mental effort; it was mere play to Salme.

Now and then it happened that some rebellious pair of breeches refused to bend to his will. In such a case he knit his brow and put his measure on his pinched lips saying—"I must think about this."

Then Moritz left his books, forgot Alexander Miltiades and Pythagorus, and put his mind to torture in meditating as to what assistance he could render in the matter. Perhaps a secret voice told him that he had better give good counsel to this poor man than occupy himself with personages who had now no need of others' attentions. And what joy he felt when at length Salme Floh, after long studies, conceived the creative thought of a new pair of breeches! At this moment he was as satisfied as if the scissors

now pitilessly cutting up the old clothes had been about to cut out for him a happy path in life.

It was thus that Salme's humble profession rose and took a deep significance in the mind of Moritz. Often he asked himself this question—

"Do our peasants work harder, and if so, do they not on the other hand enjoy themselves in their own way, whereas throughout the entire year Salme does not spend the price of a pint of wine? On Saturday, when he cannot, must not work, he goes to the synagogue and passes there half the day. In the afternoon, when dinner is over, he has his nap or reads a little out of the *Chumech,** and then goes to the Rabbi's house to take part in some Talmudic discussion. In these things consist all his pleasures. What a spectacle on the contrary presents itself at home in the village every Sunday!"

He grew profoundly religious. He took care not to write on Saturday; and thus it was that on the morrow he had to ask his fellow-scholars to give him the task of the preceding day. But he did not mind that. Still, continually, and now more than ever, even during the *Ave Maria*, he said his prayer of Schmah Isroel. It was the best way to avoid forgetting in the midst of foreign worship the God of his people, the only and eternal God.

When Moritz was back again in the village, and

* Bible.

the sickles were once more laying low the golden ears of corn, while he heard songs on every side, he no longer asked himself why his father's people were more sombre in character. He was a witness to the peasant's sweat—but also to his Sunday! Did there not live in the ghetto a Salme Floh, and was there not there more suffering and more misery?

VII.—Where is the Land of the Jew?

Moritz now felt arise within himself, like so many chords of an instrument long unstrung—his dreams and imaginations of former days. He thought again of Jerusalem; and the friend of his childhood who wandered all over the world, Mendel Wilna, returned once more to his mind. He smiled, it is true, on remembering the Sunday when with arms and baggage he had started for the holy city; and yet the image of this city re-appeared so clearly before him that he reflected whether he was not then right and whether he would not now do well to rebuild Jerusalem.

He had no doubt that this project could be executed—with goodwill. One thing alone had for some time embarrassed him; he could not picture to himself a country inhabited exclusively by Jews. And then what would be the government of the new Judæa. Like all students, Moritz

had but a vague idea of what is called a state. A king consecrated by some prophet's pouring on his head a phial of oil would have answered his purpose to perfection; but, on the other hand, how dazzling to his eyes appeared the Roman consuls dressed in the *toga prætexta*, with their *lictors* carrying bundles of sticks before them. How splendid, above all, seemed to him the tribunes of the people! How proudly they swaggered at the door of the senate to send, like a clap of thunder, into the midst of the assembly to which they could not penetrate, their redoubtable *veto* whenever some proposition had displeased them.

Then he felt himself to be one of these tribunes; he, too, was just at the door when this question was being discussed: "Whether the Jews ought to become masons and carpenters." Behind him stood the crowd, all with visages like that of his host Salme Floh. The crowd shouted, "We do not wish it;" whereupon he hurled into the hall his audacious *veto*, which made the chief of the Bunzlau community turn pale.

But how to get houses built in this new state? Who would undertake to cover the towers and roofs, since no Jew was willing to follow the trade of mason or carpenter? With a little reflection he succeeded in overcoming the difficulty; he had simply to take Christian workmen, who for fair wages would clamber up the most lofty towers.

In the matter of agriculture, he was less embarrassed. The Jews would become peasants. "If Salme Floh," he thought, "can carry on his back a sack as big as a house, he will also be well able to handle the flail for threshing corn;" but here a no less difficult question presented itself. "What would happen if the Jews in their character of peasants gave way like the latter to drink?"

The idea of the Messiah was closely connected with his project of rebuilding Jerusalem. He had not the least suspicion that he was thus disavowing his own plans of reconstruction.

At Easter, when in the evening, during the *Seder* ceremony, and before coming to the passage, "Next year we shall be at Jerusalem," the door was opened for the Messiah to enter, Moritz each time looked fixedly before him; and as the Messiah did not come in Salme Floh ordered the door to be closed, adding, with an air of indifference, "So much the worse!" and continuing to chant.

But this greatly irritated Moritz.

"I bet," he said, then, "that you would rather suffer the absence of the Messiah than the loss of one of your customers for secondhand breeches."

In spite of that he often conversed with Salme about the coming of the Messiah. It was on Saturday above all when he could most easily do so. In the week Salme was unapproachable. One day on returning home from the Dobrowitz

fair, he was in a savage humour—the poor man had gained nothing.

"Ah," said Moritz, touched with compassion, "if the Messiah came now! You would no longer need to go to fairs!"

"Let me alone, with your Messiah," replied Schlome, in anger. "I have sold altogether two children's coats, and you speak to me of the Messiah"—

Mendel Wilna must now ere long return; Moritz seemed certain of this. Was it not then time to begin work? Moritz had now reached his fifteenth year. He was familiar with all the acts and deeds of Cæsar, Brutus, and Napoleon; often he felt his heart beat as though it would leap out of his breast—but the most exciting moment of all was when he thought he heard above everything the trumpet of the Messiah. Jupiter, son of Saturn, carrying on his back the beautiful Europa, Venus, surprised with Mars in the snares of Vulcan: heathen absurdities and Jewish monotheism equally found a place in his soul.

But even now the stones were ready which were to knock down his castle in the air. The ghetto was not destined to throw these stones, but the hand of a person whose acquaintance we have made elsewhere—Honza, that is to say.

The latter had with time conceived a profound hatred against all that was German; and it was

in spite of himself and only because he must do so to win first prizes that he had consented to make a study of the German language and to express himself in it. In his leisure time, however, he always spoke Bohemian; and he reproved his friend energetically whenever he used another idiom.

"Look here, Moritz," he said, one day when they had to construct German iambics, "is it not a gross piece of injustice to make one learn things for which one has no taste? Our professor is a German; everything we have to study is in German, or Latin, whereas there is no thought of Bohemian. I can scarcely believe that I was born in Bohemia; and to myself I seem like a child stolen by some gipsy. Are you not of my opinion?"

"As far as I am concerned," said Moritz, carelessly, "it is a matter of indifference."

"In that case you are not a true Bohemian," cried Honza; and he went away in a rage.

"Not a Bohemian?" said the consciousness of Moritz, who was indignant at such an idea; and for several days he worried himself and quarrelled with Honza because the latter did not regard him as a true Bohemian. He felt cruelly insulted.

In school, for the rest, the history of their own country was seldom touched upon. Consequently the two young men knew very little about the land which had given them birth. During their second

year of study, and before they could understand the power of that breath which stirs the leaves of humanity, they had been taught the history of Bohemia concurrently with that of the other hereditary states. The professor then said a great deal about St. John Nepomucene, but the other John, that is to say, John Huss, was merely an audacious fellow who revolted against the Pope's infallibility. No pity was felt for the heretic when at Constance he had perished in the flames. The important point was that the chalice of the Hussites had been overthrown, and that a priest could once more administer the communion in the two kinds as before. Moritz and Honza thought like their professor. At the battle of the White Mountain they fought in the ranks of the imperialists against their own brethren; they saw with an indifferent eye the torn letters royal; and from this moment Bohemia ceased to exist—they let fall, again with their professor, the lid of its coffin.

One day Honza, very pale and with distorted features, came to Moritz. He had for several days past been absent from his class.

"Are you ill, Honza?" asked Moritz in alarm.

"Read that," he replied, throwing violently on the table a large book which he had brought under his arm; "the professor has deceived us."

Moritz took the volume; it was a history of Bohemia. Honza had found it in the library of

the monastery under a mass of fathers of the Church and classical works. The title of the book had caught his eye, and he had asked the rector's permission to take it away. He had no sooner read the first few pages than he suspected the professor's treachery; and when continuing his perusal, he saw pass before him John Huss, Ziska, and the two Procopinses of gigantic stature he became furious. He read the book three times; and on coming finally to the last page his conviction was, "The professor has deceived us."

Moritz now read in his turn; but he received quite another impression. In his character of Jew he knew nothing about the religious quarrels of Bohemia; and at heart he was perfectly indifferent whether the communion was administered in one or both kinds. He could not see why on the subject of the body and blood of the Saviour people should engage in such cruel combats; but what struck him forcibly was the political significance of it all. He saw in the matter a struggle wherein were concerned wealth, liberty, and independence; here his own personal feelings were concerned; Jerusalem and Bohemia! Did not the same gigantic spectre envelop these two gigantic corpses in the silence of the tomb?

In class the two young men looked at each other with an air of intelligence, but found nothing to say; they could not account for this historical

grief which had its source in the melancholy with which they had both cast eyes on the chronicle of their country.

"Shall I tell you, Honza," said Moritz, some days after, "what history the history of Bohemia most resembles?"

"It resembles none other," replied Honza, proudly.

"But I tell you that it bears a great resemblance to the history of the Jews."

Honza laughed beyond measure.

"Have you a Ziska?" he cried; "have you Hussites?"

"Well," said Moritz, "but have we not Macchabees?"

"As to them," returned Honza, "I know nothing; moreover they have long been dead. But the Hussites"—

"Are they not dead, too?"

"Oh, no," said Honza, with a mysterious air, "they are still alive."

Some time afterwards he explained to his fellow-scholar how he regarded, as Hussites, all those who loved Bohemia. And according to him those only cherished the country who spoke its language.

"And," asked Moritz, "am I one of these?"

"Yes, if you wish to speak Bohemian," replied Honza.

So Moritz promised to be a Hussite.

On Sundays and *fête* days, and whenever there was a holiday, the two students did themselves the pleasure of paying a visit to a ruin known as Buttna. The old castle possessed for them a peculiar attraction since Ziska had passed by the place as the angel of vengeance. Here they remained seated for hours at a time; and when the moon was shining they seemed to see issuing from the cracked walls the shades of those who perished on the spot in former days. Let us hear one of the conversations which took place at Buttna.

"What a fine thing it would be, Moritz," said Honza, after throwing a silent glance on the plains lying at his feet, "if everybody in Bohemia spoke the same language. At one village you are addressed in German, at another in Bohemian."

"Just as in the days of the Tower of Babel," observed Moritz. "People asked for bricks and they got mortar. They could no longer understand each other, and separated because, in spite of every endeavour, they found it impossible to do so."

"They did not go forth by tribes, supposing that so far back tribes existed; and it would be useless to assert the contrary. I should not believe it. Those among them who found that by chance they used the same words, joined themselves together; and it was only from this moment

they formed nations because they spoke the same tongue. And whoever had a father or mother whom he could no longer understand went and attached himself, by preference, to those with whom he was able to converse."

"I cannot imagine," said Moritz, pensively, "how a person could abandon his father and mother."

"But if they no longer understood you?" cried Honza, with warmth. "What would you feel inclined to do if, while you were saying something agreeable to your mother, she thought you were cursing her?"

"Honza," exclaimed Moritz, "what are you saying? Curse a mother!"

"Is not Bohemia mother of us all, and has she not thousands of children who do not understand her? Let those therefore leave her. The good, the true, and the faithful only, those, in short, whom she will have no cause to curse, ought to remain with her. Ziska knew this very well, and it was for that very reason he thundered as he did."

Moritz listened shuddering to Honza's wild words. Without putting it to Honza he asked himself this question from the depth of his soul—

"Is this true also of the Jews?"

For the moment he did not come to a decision.

While they conversed thus, joyous strains of

music, from the heart of the village lying at the foot of the hill reached their ears. Among other instruments, a trumpet in particular sent forth such lively notes, that the echo, as though provoked, replied on all sides. The sound of this music which they heard somewhat indistinctly soothed nevertheless their minds. The strains recalled to Moritz the parlour of his father's inn, and the peasants' Sunday.

"Is to-day Sunday then?" he said, after having remained listening for some time.

"Does the music make you think so? It is doubtless a wedding."

"Ah! I should so much like to see a wedding once more," escaped from Moritz.

"And what would you do if you were present at one?"

"Look on."

"You know the peasants do not like that; they think you go to make fun of them."

"I! I make fun of peasants, Honza? Are you mad?"

"And if they invite you to dinner and you say, 'I must not touch this, I am forbidden to do so,' then are you not making fun of them?"

"But if I am indeed forbidden?"

"O, what a fine, magnificent Hussite!" cried Honza, with great disdain. "How can you say such a thing?"

The music, the conversation, and raillery combined produced a revolution in the mind of Moritz. He felt ashamed before Honza—and the angel of his old belief now turned away from him with pain.

"Come," he cried impetuously, "I want to show you that I am a Hussite!"

He leapt forward; Honza sprang after him. Descending the hill, they arrived at the village out of breath. Then the resounding trumpet led them to the house where the marriage was being celebrated. Honza, as though at home, threw himself into the midst of the revelry, at once took possession of a pretty girl, and joined with her in a rough dance, uttering cries of joy, and stamping the floor with his feet. Moritz kept aloof, and looked on. When Honza happened to pass where he stood he counselled him, saying—

"Come along, follow my example, and don't be ashamed."

Moritz was no longer himself; his feet began to move on their own account, and before he knew what he was doing he had already joined in the dance, and was leaping and singing with a huge servant girl on his arm.

The dance at an end, Moritz and Honza sat down in a corner of the room, exhausted with fatigue, and bathed in perspiration. The bride's mother brought them cakes, meat, and beer.

Moritz did not abstain from the refreshments. Otherwise would not the fanatical Honza have derided him?

It was not till late at night that they returned to Bunzlau. Honza sang at the top of his voice until they arrived at the college. Then he became silent. Moritz had already some time before ceased to sing. The evening breeze had cooled his blood. Intoxication had abandoned his soul, reflection had returned; and at this moment he was bleeding from a thousand wounds.

VIII.—The Return.

The sight of the ghetto made him repent.

"I have sinned;" he cried, "how can I obtain forgiveness?"

He became an object of horror to himself; and, as if his body and soul were separated, they reproached one another reciprocally with the past. Who among us does not know, by experience, certain moments in life when one becomes simultaneously one's own judge and accuser?

These few seconds had made Moritz older by several years. Sin shook all the fibres of his soul and caused to appear before him his existence so innocent and so pure of former days.

It was the eve of the pretty *Schebouoth* fête.*

* Pentecost.

Rays of light shone from all the windows; the ghetto had become silent, a festive air reigned in it. Everywhere families were taking their evening repast. His host and hostess, quite ready for the festival, were only waiting for Moritz. But he dared not show himself to Salme Floh with lips which he considered soiled; it seemed to him that people must read from his features that he had just committed a sin.

Moritz was firmly resolved not to go indoors, at least for supper. He sat down on one of the steps leading to the rectorial house, and covering his eyes with his hands, reflected on his sad situation. One single hour! What harm had it not done to him! It had profaned, abased, and, as it were, excommunicated him. He believed that he was condemned to live henceforth and for ever in sin; for the all-powerful God who visits sins unto the third and fourth generation could not pardon him. At this moment a man of superb stature, dressed in the costume of the Polish Jews, was slowly descending the steps. Just as he was about to pass by Moritz the latter rose quickly, a prey to fear not unmixed with joy.

"Rebb Mendel Wilna!" he cried, "it is Rebb Mendel Wilna!"

The mendicant paused, and for some time gazed at the young man.

"*Schmah Isroel!*" he cried at length, "is it not

the Randar Rebb Schmull's son? Is it not Moschele?"

"Otherwise, how could I so soon have recognised you?" said Moritz.

"*Salem alechem!*"*

"*Alechem salem,*"† replied Moritz, and they shook hands with joy.

Mendel could not find enough words to express the happiness he felt at meeting Moritz in so unexpected a manner. He inquired after his father and mother, and asked whether their house was, as formerly, frequented by a great number of *schnorrer*. Moritz answered all these questions as well as he could.

"I have brought from Jerusalem," he said, "that earth which I promised your parents. For more than five years I carried it about with me without being able to take it to its destination, since I did not return to Bohemia. A long time has elapsed; I am doubtless quite forgotten at the Randar's."

Moritz assured him that he was often spoken of by his parents, and that only a few moments ago he had himself thought of Mendel.

"So," said Mendel, in a high voice, "you still think of Jerusalem? You remember that Saturday we took a walk together, and the day you wanted so much to go with me, but when I

* Peace be with you. † With you also.

was obliged to send you back? *Schmah Israel*, how it broke my heart! I could not banish you from my mind before I had walked several leagues."

"I can see myself now," replied Moritz, "just as I was then equipped; and I still feel the grief I experienced when I had to return all alone. I was ashamed and confused, and I feared they would make fun of me."

While conversing thus, and as Moritz pronounced these last words in good, pure German, they arrived under a lamp. At the sound of this language, and moreover by the help of the light, the *schnorrer* perceived that he had no longer the Randar's child of eight to deal with, but a big boy of slender figure. What in particular made him look more matured and older was a certain wrinkle at the corners of his lips; was it due to the doubtful light, or had some deep grief engraved it there?

Moritz saw that the *schnorrer* had all at once become uneasy; he had taken some steps backwards as though mistaken in his companion. Moritz trembled from the bottom of his soul; he already feared lest Mendel had read his sin on his visage.

"What feeling is this which has come upon me?" said Mendel, after a long pause. "I thought I had found Moschele, Rebb Schmull's son, and whom do I see? Pardon me, sir, I am doubtless deceived! How can a *schnorrer* still speak to you?'

"Oh, heavens!" sighed Moritz from the depth of his soul. "Has one single moment so changed me that I am no longer recognised by my old friends?"

"It is indeed his voice," murmured Mendel, and then he took the young man by the hand and said to him in the most cordial tone, "You must not be annoyed with me, Moschele; I call you still by this name though you have become so tall that you ought now to be called Rebb Moscheh.* But first of all answer this question. Have you remained a good Jew?"

"Why, this question, Mendel?" said Moritz, with a shudder, "and who can reply to it?"

"Even that," rejoined the *schnorrer* immediately, "shows me, sir, that you are still a good Jew. One ought always to remain so; studies ought to make no difference. Otherwise, what would happen the day Jerusalem was rebuilt, and when the Almighty chose suddenly to recall the whole of Israel to Himself? There would certainly be no lack of Jews; but if among them *chachomim* † were found wanting, what ever should we do? And now I want to tell you everything."

"But only explain to me, Rebb Mendel, how the idea of rebuilding Jerusalem occurred to you.

* Moschele means little Moscheh. It is the diminutive of the latter word.

† Sages.

It seems to me so strange at the present time. Who has any thought of it to-day?"

"You; you are the oracle of Heaven," cried the mendicant, with the enthusiasm we already know him to possess. "Who is better aware of this than I? God has left a guardian in His vineyard, and that guardian am I. Only Mendel Wilna's shoulders are not strong enough to support by themselves the burden of Jerusalem. I must have an assistant, and in your infancy I chose you to help me. But come; I want to tell you everything."

They were now once more at the rectorial steps. Mendel sat down on one of them, and Moritz placed himself by his side. The darkness was intense. Silence reigned everywhere. The *schnorrer* commenced.

"I have not always wandered about the world as a beggar as I do now. When a man has become poor, and is reduced to live on alms, people find it difficult to believe that he can ever have seen better days. At one time I also gave to others, and from one year's end to another my father's house (blessed be his memory!) was open to the poor and to strangers like that of the Randar Rebb Schmull.

"My father was one of the richest *balbatim* (heads of households) in Wilna. You may have read in your books that Wilna is in Russian Poland. At one time

there was only one Poland, but Poland has shared the fate of Israel. Some one has taken one portion, some one else another, and in the end there is nothing left of her. She has been torn to pieces like Joseph's coat which our patriarch Jacob had given him. 'Look here,' said Joseph's brothers, "look at your son's garment; he has been destroyed by wild beasts in the forest.' But I am passing from one idea to another. My infancy was not a happy one. I may say that I was born with the *Gemara*. Among us Poles they do not put playthings into the hands of children; they do not give them whips or drums, saying, 'Play with this.' Oh, no. But as soon as they can lisp a few words a rabbi comes to teach them the *Gemara*, and they have to study night and day.

"You in your infancy could run where you liked free as a little bird whose wants were all supplied by its mother, and on the holy Sabbath, when you wanted to tear off the branch of a tree, I only prevented you by making you very frightened. *Schmah Isroel!* What would have happened to me if in my infancy such an idea had occurred to me! And the idea never did occur to me because I knew the thing was forbidden. At your age I had already half the *Gemara* in my head, and in face of this how could I commit a sin? I could tell perfectly well whether a thing was sinful or no.

"At Wilna many people told me that I had a

good head. When ten years of age I knew all the prophets by heart, and when any one opened the *Tenach* * to light on a passage at random I was always able at once to continue from memory. At *Cheder* † I often put my *Rebbe* ‡ in the greatest embarrassment by proposing to him questions which he could not answer. What do you think he did then? He took his pipe stem, which was as long and as thick as a stick, and beat me till my body was tender all over. I ought not, he said, to ask him these questions. This did not prevent me from doing many other things for which he thrashed me in the same way. You have never known such misery, Moschele. Heaven must certainly have pitied my sufferings.

"You may be a Jewish child, but still you can form no idea of all this. It is a great misfortune for us that children no longer learn one and the same thing. You learn German and Latin; I have learned only Hebrew. We are both Jews, and yet you cannot imagine how I was brought up. This comes, alas, of our *goles*.

"My father had no other son but me. I had, however, a little sister named Blumele. There is a Jewish proverb which says, 'My name must have figured on Mount Sinai.' All I can tell you is that the day on which the Almighty created flowers in the gardens and fields to gladden the

* Pentateuch. † School. ‡ Master.

heart of man, He must certainly have thought of our Blumele.* You cannot picture to yourself what an extraordinary child she was. The most beautiful part of her was her eyes; one never got tired of looking at them. Often, when you were still a child, I occupied myself with examining you, for you strikingly resembled her. Heavens! how I loved that sister!

"After her third year, Blumele was incessantly ill. But her intelligence was something prodigious; you might have taken lessons from her. She must have been under some influence. People had predicted that we should not preserve the child. She was too intelligent, and in the few years of her life she used up an amount of mental force which might have served her till she was eighty.

"She was truly an extraordinary child. Often she was taken with pains and convulsions. Then if gold and bon-bons were put before her she would not touch them.

"'What do you want, Blumele darling?' we asked.

"'Sing to me,' she would say.

"Thereupon, often in the middle of the night, my father and I began to sing one of those joyous songs which the *hazan* † is accustomed to sing at the synagogue on the day of the *Simches Thora*.‡

* Little flower. † Official singer.
‡ *Fête* of rejoicing in honour of the promulgation of the law.

But then she began to cry and weep more than ever, so that I felt my hair rise on end. We entreated her to be calm, and shed tears ourselves.

"'Don't cry, Blumele. Have we not sung you a song?'

"'Sing me something about Jerusalem,' she said.

"I must tell you that the child wanted to hear about nothing but Jerusalem, as though we had never spoken to her on any other subject. In Poland we have certain songs relating to Jerusalem, and I sang to her as many as I knew. And you may perhaps suppose that she then went to sleep like other children when one sings to them of sheep grazing on the plain? But not at all. During the whole time she would keep her eyes open, arranging the *Mizrach* suspended before her as she listened. After this she frequently lay calm and tranquil in her bed an entire day.

"On other occasions, at her request, I spoke to her about Jerusalem. I never grew tired of telling her stories on this subject. So at last I had communicated to her the whole *Chorban** from beginning to end, and she had not lost a single word.

"Nevertheless the child grew worse and worse, and, like a candle which is continually burning away, she approached nearer and nearer her death. During the last part of her life she made me pass

* History of the destruction of Jerusalem.

whole nights at her bedside talking about Jerusalem.

"Blumele has long been dead.

"I can still see the pious people of the community saying the prayer of the dead for her; they filled the room. I cried till I could not see. For a moment they thought her dead; so, as is usually done in such cases, a feather was applied to her nose in order to tell whether she still breathed. For a long while the feather remained motionless, but suddenly Blumele opened her eyes, turned towards the *Mizrach*, and looked at it. She wanted once more to utter the word 'Jerusalem.' But when she had pronounced the first half of it death chilled her lips.

"The day the dead are resuscitated that is certainly the first word she will speak.

"Men ought not, as a rule, to mention their vexations or their griefs, however great these may be. It is better for them before Heaven to preserve silence. But all I can tell you is that I would willingly be now lying in the tomb instead of Blumele.

"It was not till after Blumele's death that I perceived the void it had caused around me. Then, too, I found that the stories about Jerusalem I had been continually telling had produced within me a thought which nothing could get out of my head. I could not henceforth avoid thinking incessantly

of Jerusalem. At night I often seemed to hear a voice like Blumele's; then I awoke and could not sleep the rest of the night.

"In course of time I thought less frequently of Blumele, but on the other hand I thought more of Jerusalem. I cannot now recollect how the idea that the holy city ought to be rebuilt came to me. There was nothing else in my head night and day. Often I shut myself in my little room and prayed the Almighty to reconstruct Jerusalem soon. I besought Him to perform a miracle in my name. On these occasions my soul was no longer of this world, and I spoke to the Almighty face to face, like our prophet Moses.

"You will laugh perhaps when I tell you that every morning when I got up I thought I was at Jerusalem. But the Almighty was not willing to do a miracle, although I had so earnestly prayed for one.

"What idea do you think I now conceived? I thought the Almighty was not willing to perform a miracle because I had sinned too much, and could no longer cleanse myself of my faults. And do you know what I did then? My heart revolted against Him. I was grieved, and I began to murmur against Him. 'Why,' I often cried, 'wilt Thou not do miracles? How can I prevail upon Thee to do so? Has the time, then, not yet arrived for rebuilding Jerusalem?'

"But what is man but a vessel in the potter's hands—a piece of earth? I soon returned to my Maker, but henceforth I never again thought He would do a miracle in my name.

"Then another idea occurred to me. 'If the Almighty is not willing to aid me,' I said, 'I will aid myself.'

"I had long since gone through my *bar-mitzveh*,* and when I was fifteen years old my father wanted me to marry the pretty daughter of a *balboz* (father of a family) at Wilna. You know that among us Jews the child has to obey when the father commands. So I did not say 'no,' and I got engaged to her.

"During the whole year which elapsed between my betrothal and marriage I was possessed with but one idea—how to escape from my *kalle*.† I had something else to think of than a pretty girl. Often, believe me, she wept tears of blood when I remained hours in her company without saying a word.

"'Mendel,' she frequently exclaimed, 'do you love me?'

"And when she approached me I pushed her away.

"Even to-day I ask myself how I passed that year. Every evening I put my pack on my

* Religious initiation. † Bride.

shoulders ready to set out. And why did I not go? Because I thought of the shame which would cover my betrothed. At length the wedding day arrived. A Jew had never a sadder wedding. The *kalle* wept, the bridegroom* wept also. How could I be gay; ought I not already to have set out?

"I remained, all the same, ten years with my wife. She gave me two children, pretty and good like herself. But I had my *evil spirit* like King Saul; the idea of rebuilding Jerusalem allowed me no repose.

"My father had put me in business; but I was good for nothing. I had to deal in ox-skins; but Jerusalem alone was in my head. In time this idea took a stronger and stronger hold upon me, and my father, who could make no use of me, said to me one day, 'Now try and get your own living.' 'All right,' I replied, 'I will go to Jerusalem.'

"But this time I communicated my projects to my wife. She began to cry, and hung the children round my neck. I freed myself from them and started off.

"It was not till I had made long journeys all over the world that I got at length a clear view of my ideas and desires. 'Mendel, you madman,' I often said to myself, 'how could you think of rebuilding Jerusalem by yourself? All the Jews will have to aid in the work; the whole of Israel

* Male lover.

must have but one will, and then only can the Messiah come.'

"Consequently, before going to Jerusalem I wanted to prepare every one. It would take too long to tell you how, with this object, I travelled into every country. In two years I went all over Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, and Moravia, passing from *kille* to *kille*.* In the synagogues I preached on Isaiah and his words on the subject of Jerusalem. I occupied myself above all with children. Wherever I saw one in whose eyes seemed to repose something of that spirit of the Almighty which moved on the face of the waters, I spoke to him of Jerusalem; and you were not the only child, Moschele, who wished to rebuild the city with me. Children often understand me better than grown-up persons.

"My hair has turned white, my body has grown weak, but my heart is still young. I believe steadfastly, and the Almighty is my guarantee, that we shall go back to Jerusalem. Doubtless this will not be to-morrow; and I may die first. But the day will come. You and many others will follow the movement; and you will not forget that Mendel Wilna once wandered all over the world. I shall work as long as there is breath in me.

"That is rather a long story. I shall only tell you one more thing; I am going to Vienna to see

* Jewish community.

Rothschild and a number of other rich persons living there. They will feel bound to contribute some of their fortune and influence to rebuild Jerusalem. I know Rothschild can do anything; and he will be able to do this. Something in my heart tells me that this time I am not going on a useless journey. Rothschild is a good Jew, he is sure to rebuild Jerusalem."

IX.—The Letter.

When on the morrow of this fatal day Moritz awoke, it was already very late. It was Sunday. A good thing for him, since otherwise he would have missed his class. The events of yesterday produced on him the effect of a bad dream. All his members were sluggish as lead, so that he tottered more than once in trying to walk across his room. His body like his soul was unsteady.

His host, Salme Floh, had a long while been looking at him with folded arms and an ironical smile.

"On my soul, Fradel," he said, in a low voice to his wife, "he is still quite *schicker*."*

Fradel did not reply to this remark; she was content to wipe her eyes with the corner of her apron, and to regard the young sinner with pity.

By degrees Moritz collected his wits. He re-

* Drunk.

membered that he had not yet said his prayer. Mechanically he stretched his hand towards the little bag containing the *teffillin** in order to place them round his arms and neck before praying. But quite a quarter of an hour elapsed before he had finished these operations. He put everything on the wrong way; thus, instead of placing the knot of the phylacteries on the centre of his forehead, he reversed them, so that the knot came just above the nape of his neck.

Observing this, Salme began to roar with laughter, his mouth wide open.

"On my soul," he replied, "if I let him alone he will end by going to saw wood on the holy *Jontoff*† day."

The word *Jontoff* brought Moritz to himself again. One glance at his host, dressed in his holiday clothes and ready to go to the synagogue showed him his error, for on festival days it is not permitted to wear phylacteries.

"Well, do you understand me, young man?" said Salme with authority, seeing that Moritz was still slow in taking off the *teffillin*. "Fortunate for you that it is *Jontoff* day; for this reason. I shall say nothing to you. Otherwise you would learn who Salme Floh is."

Thereupon he started for the synagogue, not without slamming the door after him.

* Phylacteries. † A Jewish Festival.

Singular thoughts crossed our student's mind during the two days his host and hostess were sullen with him. He could not think his sin was so great; and Mendel Wilna, by his narrative had contributed not a little to bring about this change in his judgment. Moritz saw in Mendel an existence displaced by extravagances which had thrown him off the path of ordinary life; and although but a little while ago he had had dreams of the same nature, he could not now help laughing when he thought of Mendel Wilna, with whom at one time he was, as it were mixed up.

"A droll madman!" Moritz could not prevent himself from saying. "Were he not so sincere in his project of reconstructing Jerusalem, I should laugh at him to his face. Leave wife and children, wander over the whole world to get people to rebuild Jerusalem! Does he think seriously that my host Salme Floh will leave his breeches and his waistcoats? Well! that little sister of Mendel's was a strange child! She spoke of nothing but Jerusalem, and she died of it. Such ideas are not made for the world; they are stricken down at birth. I did not perceive this before now. I am almost inclined to say that Mendel Wilna is himself dead. He is nothing more than a phantom."

Moritz no longer sought his old friend. The two festival days passed without his seeing him again. He had kept away from a remnant of his former

feeling of respect; he feared, in fact, that he might not be able to listen with enough seriousness to Mendel's account of his *follies*.

Moritz had for the rest no suspicion of the storm which was gathering over his head.

On the following Tuesday, when after the holidays he had to return to the college, he found Salme Floh making extraordinary preparations for letter-writing. As soon as Moritz entered the room, Salme said :—"Can you lend me a pen and an inkstand?" Salme had a sombre visage, and his eyebrows were lowered like clouds which announce the coming tempest.

Fradel, his wife, who stood at his side, said to him in an undertone, so that Moritz might not hear :—

"Don't do it, Salme."

But Salme replied to her in an impetuous voice—"Silence, do not interfere! If I don't I shall perhaps bring a misfortune on myself."

"What kind of pen do you want?" inquired Moritz.

"It matters little," answered Salme, with a terrible smile.

As he was searching in his portfolio, Moritz ventured to ask, "To whom are you going to write, Salme?"

We must mention that it was the first time he had seen his host give himself up to this occupation.

"You will see very soon," replied Salme, in a morose tone; "meanwhile give me the pen."

Moritz handed him one.

"To some bad debtor, no doubt?" he said.

"Some one whom I ought to write to—that's the truth," returned Salme, as he dipped his pen into the ink. Moritz began to work at one of his tasks, and placed himself in a corner.

Salme wrote his letter without once removing his attention therefrom; it made him perspire for an hour at least. When he had finished he said in a low voice to his wife:—"Do you want to hear it?"

Fradel pointed to the student, whose back was turned towards them, intimating that it was impossible to read the letter in his presence.

"You think I care for that?" replied Salme, aloud; "he may hear it if he likes."

Thereupon he began reading what he had just written, first in a moderate tone, and then in a louder and louder voice.

The letter was as follows:—

"Holy Community of Bunzlau,
this 7th day of *Siwan*.

"Dear Rebb Randar Schmull, and dear Mme. Schmull: may you live a hundred years!

"The Almighty knows with what grief I take up my pen. But it makes one's hair stand on end

to think of the recent conduct of your son, who for the last five years has been lodging with me. To my wife who wanted to dissuade me and said, 'Salme, don't do it,' I replied, with an exclamation, saying that I should be exposing myself to some just misfortune if I did not at once inform the Randar Rebb Schmull of the matter. You have made of your son a nice boy! He has no longer a farthing's-worth of Jewish blood in his veins. Do you know what your dear Moritz has done? On a holy *Jontof* day he went with his *chaver** Honza to the village, and there danced, drank, ate—and with whom? Great God! With peasant girls and youths of a nice kind! Some people from the *kille* passed by and saw everything with their own eyes. Then they came to me and said—'Your boarder is a pretty youth! Whose son is he?' I replied to them—'He is the son of the Randar Rebb Schmull; his father is a pious Jew.' How agreeable to be asked such questions! 'Well, Salme,' they replied, 'go and bring him home, he is already so *schicker*† that he cannot stand on his legs.' As for me, my heart was almost broken in my body. It was eleven o'clock at night when Moritz returned. I have not said a word to him till now. Do with your child as you think fit; I have discharged my duty. I will add but one thing

* Companion. † Drunk.

more: if Honza sets foot again in my house I shall give him a *hamvorech*,* in which he will certainly get his arms and legs broken. Never will I tolerate a *posche-Isroel*,† in my house; and if your Moritz decides to repeat his conduct, I do not say I shall not treat him as I should Honza, Pawel, or Wasta. Now I wish you good health, and remain your sincerely devoted

"SALME FLOH (the younger)."

During the reading Moritz, who, from the very first had seen that it concerned him, had turned his chair round, and with apparent indifference remained seated facing Salme and his wife. When Salme had finished, he looked at the student with an air of triumph; he expected to see him confounded, crushed. But Moritz broke out into a loud laugh, took up his books and cap, and before Salme could say a word to him had gone out of the door.

"What do you think of that?" asked Salme, when he had recovered from his first feeling of terror.

"Did I not dissuade you?" said the pacific Fradel. "You would not listen to me."

Salme fell into a profound reverie.

"This young man," he cried, after a long silence,

* Reception. † Bad Jew.

"is perfectly ripe for *gehenna*.* Well, I shall send the letter all the same."

The host's missive reached the Randar's farm only a quarter of an hour after Mendel Wilna. The arrival of the *schnorrer*, whose long absence had caused regret, produced in Schmull and Rachel a feeling of joyful emotion. The Randar talked familiarly with his guest, and made him relate the whole history of his journey to Jerusalem. Suddenly the *schnorrer* took from his pack two little bags which he gave to Schmul, saying, "Here is what I promised you some time ago."

Rebb Schmull did not remember the promise; he felt the bags and asked what they contained.

"Earth from Jerusalem," replied the *schnorrer*.

"Seriously? Is it Jerusalem earth?" said the Randar, in astonishment.

"I collected it on the very spot," said Mendel, "where formerly stood our holy temple."

The Randar trembling with joy, opened the little bags, and his eyes shone with a strange lustre directly he beheld before him this earth, which though common enough in appearance, was of inestimable value.

"Is it indeed Jerusalem earth?" he asked once more. "Do not deceive me, Rebb Mendel, for I want this when I am dead to be placed under my head."

* Perdition.

"Am I then such a liar?" inquired the *schnorrer*. "Wait; here is the attestation signed by a Rabbi of Jerusalem."

He handed him a paper bearing a gigantic seal, but the Randar did not read it.

He took the two little bags, as well as the written attestation, and placed the former on a secret shelf in a cupboard.

Meantime the Randar's wife entered with Salme's letter. Her features were distorted; tears stood in her eyes. Before the arrival of the letter Mendel had already told her how he found Moritz at an advanced hour of the night seated on the rectorial steps.

At this news the Randar's wife had at once shaken her head: "What could Moritz have to do so late in the streets, and why, above all, was he sitting on the steps?"

Then the letter arrived, and she had no difficulty in divining it all. She became wholly a prey to grief and sorrow. She had come to communicate the letter to her husband. But as soon as she entered the latter, still delighted with the beggar's present, cried—

"Rachel, guess what Rebb Mendel has brought us."

"How do I know?" she asked with a sad smile.

"Earth from Jerusalem," said Rebb Schmull, going towards the cupboard to take out the two little bags.

The Randar's wife, with her motherly heart, had at once half perceived the danger of telling her husband of the letter at a moment when he was full of religious emotion. So she kept the contents to herself, just as one might conceal a mortal wound.

But in the night a thought occurred to her as her head rested on the pillow. "My God!" she said, "is it really study that has so corrupted my child? Yet how many people have studied without ceasing for that reason to be good Jews? And why should they have hurt my child alone? What would Schmull say if he knew it? Better he had remained in the village with peasants and amid the tons of brandy. But is it true? No, no; for a single hour the child may have been under a bad inspiration. But that is all."

And she did not show her husband the letter.

X.—Causes and Effects.

The life of Honza had latterly been very sad. A whole month had passed without his receiving the least assistance from home. His father Waczlaw, formerly one of the most affluent peasants in the village, had, thanks to drunkenness, fallen to the lowest depth. House, fields and meadows had been sacrificed to the passion for spirits, to which he was given up. Honza's mother often came to

him at Bunzlau: and there she told him how all the money went to the Randar, and that there was not enough left to make Honza a coat. The father dissipated everything; he was even capable any moment of taking the cow out of the shed to sell her at the neighbouring fair.

One may say that in tavern rooms like the Randar's, there reigns a kind of demon, whose nature is quite peculiar. Those who feel themselves drawn thither, know this demon; they know even the way of escape from him. But a thousand obstacles arise, and shackle their good will. There is for instance, the sign-board of the inn, whose lustre invites and attracts; then idleness. Thirst takes them there least of all. In Waczlaw's case it was the Randar's account book. He was persuaded that all his misfortune came from that. Every one knows how an idea, when once it has found place in a brain obscured by drink and passion, takes gradually consistency and form.

Waczlaw was certainly right in attributing all his misfortune to the account book; but he did not stop there. He believed that if he could cause it to disappear from the world, all would be well. So he meditated stealing the book; but he failed whenever he made the attempt.

It happened at last, that one fine night the Randar's house took fire. The flames were already consuming the granary when the tocsin was

sounded. Fortunately the fire did not spread further; the granary alone was burnt with all the preceding summer's corn, which had been lying stored up some time.

Strange to say the Randar's suspicions at once fell on Waczlaw; no one but him could have committed the incendiarism. He went to the bailiff and tried to get the peasant arrested.

Waczlaw had to submit to an interrogation. He avowed all, saying it was to revenge himself on the Jew, and in the hope of making the account-book disappear, that he set fire to the house.

This took place shortly before the distribution of prizes.

One day Moritz and Honza left their class together chatting. When they got to the square where the prison stood, they saw a crowd of men pressing around a prisoner who had just been brought thither. They approached from curiosity; but no sooner had Honza perceived the prisoner, than he uttered a loud cry and fell to the ground unconscious.

A few good-hearted persons under Moritz's direction carried him home.

When Honza recovered from his swoon, he found Moritz standing by his bedside holding one of his cold hands. The poor boy opened his eyes with a sigh, and one glance at Moritz sufficed to bring the past gradually back to his mind. Moritz

smiled, but this proof of his sympathy seemed only to produce disgust in Honza. With all the strength which remained to him, he repelled his fellow-scholar with such violence that the latter staggered and fell in a corner of the room.

"Honza, Honza," said Moritz, "do you not know me then?"

"Go to the devil," cried Honza furiously, "you Jews are the sole cause of my father's misery."

"That is untrue," replied Moritz, pale and with quivering lips.

"Have you not supplied him with drink?" cried Honza, "have you not made profit out of him, till he is at last in irons? You have ruined us. Your father is a leech glutted with the blood of the whole village."

Then he hid his face in the bedclothes and lay still, sobbing. Moritz with indignation and anger in his heart, stood near the door without saying a word.

"Misery! misery!" exclaimed Honza, "I cannot henceforth show myself to any one. My father in irons! The world will spit in my face! Those cursed Jews! they have taken everything! May the thunder of God destroy them!"

"You are a liar, Honza," replied Moritz, "you are no better than your father. He was always a drunkard."

"Go to the devil!" cried Honza immediately, "you are no better than your father. You are both the same, there is no difference."

In a rage Moritz opened the door and went out.

In two days the distribution of prizes would take place. Moritz awaited the ceremony with feverish uneasiness. Honza's misfortune followed him everywhere like a shadow, and he could not help thinking that all this must be connected with some event in his father's own house. He had no news of home, and he nearly died from doubt and uneasiness.

On the very night of the prize day Moritz returned late to the village. With a palpitating heart he arrived at the door of the house. There were still lights in the public room. All was silent. Shortly afterwards, when his arrival had occasioned a noise, he saw something move near the table. It was Hannele, who had fallen asleep while waiting for her brother.

"Who is there?" she asked, regarding Moritz fixedly with eyes still heavy from sleep.

"It is I," said Moritz.

Hannele ran up to him and embraced him tenderly.

"How are father and mother?" inquired Moritz.

"Father is well, he is asleep. Mother"—

"Well, mother?" cried Moritz with anxiety.

"Don't you know then what has happened? We have had a fire here."

Moritz in terror gazed in her eyes.

"And do you know who did it? You would never have imagined it could have been the peasant Waczlaw?"

"Honza, Honza!" exclaimed Moritz in painful recollection.

"What are you saying about Honza?" cried Hannele frightened, "it was his father who did it. Well, the next day father said it could have been no one but Waczlaw. The fire broke out, and the whole granary was destroyed before a single peasant in the village stirred to extinguish the flames. We had to cry out and supplicate to get the least help."

"Not a soul, do you say, wanted to put out the fire?" asked Moritz, and he became deeply pensive. Then changing all at once as his memory returned to him he cried out, "And mother?"

But already the Randar's wife had recognised the voice of her well-beloved child. She had risen noiselessly, and at this moment appeared in the doorway with a light in her hand. At the sight of her Moritz was extremely frightened, she was so pale. She seemed ill to the point of death. He leaped up to her uttering a loud cry. For some time she held him clasped in her arms.

"I am so glad you have come," she said. "If

you had delayed longer you might not perhaps have seen me again."

Moritz looked at her sadly.

"I know it, I have death in my heart. Waczlaw the peasant is the cause."

"Can you speak thus, dear mother?" interrupted Moritz.

"I know what I am saying," continued the Randar's wife with a painful smile.

Moritz shuddered to the bottom of his soul. Everywhere he saw nothing but bad omens. He passed the night amid tears and sorrow. As soon as daylight appeared he hastily got up, and went out to see the ruined granary. Morning vapours hung over the mountains and valleys; peasants were going into the fields. They saluted the student who had returned among them, but Moritz made scarcely any acknowledgment, and in a sombre mood followed them with his eyes.

"Not one wanted to put out the fire," he repeated in painful remembrance, "not one!"

But when he beheld the remains of the fire on the ground, and the masonry blackened by the smoke, and there was nothing, even to the blue sky which tranquilly contemplated all such scenes, that did not fill his soul with inexpressible anger:

"Cursed be that dog Waczlaw," he cried; "was it necessary for him to bring this disaster on our house! What wrong have we done him? Honza

is a liar if he accuses my father. No one in the village cares for us, that is the simple explanation. They would willingly drown the whole family of us at one plunge. As they cannot touch our bodies, they turn their attention to our property. Not a soul wanted to put out the fire!"

He then went and sat down on a burnt beam and dreamily contemplated the work of destruction. He thought again of his poor sick mother; and his heart being profoundly sad, he looked upon her as doomed. Already he saw her heaving her last sigh, die, and descending into the grave.

He was awakened from his dreams by Hannele, who had for some time been at his side.

"Why did you get up so early?" she asked.

"I could not sleep," replied Moritz with a sombre air.

"No more could I," said Hannele, "I was grieved."

"Grieved? What by?" inquired Moritz, and he could not help smiling. Then he began to reflect, and added with a sigh, "I understand, it was because of mother."

"Of course mother causes me grief," replied Hannele blushing, and then after a little hesitation, "Is not Honza also coming home for the holidays?"

"What have you in common with Honza?"

returned Moritz in a violent passion, "Honza is our enemy, like his father; they are both the same."

"Honza is not to blame," said Hannele in a voice of emotion; "he has not a drop of Waczlaw's blood in his veins. Honza would be incapable of handling a torch."

"You think so?" interrupted Moritz with bitter irony. "If you had heard what I have! I was obliged to listen to him while he cursed our parents and all of us."

"Me as well?" asked Hannele.

"Every one of us," said Moritz boiling with anger; "you, like the others."

He then described to her his scene with Honza, in terms which the still lively remembrance of what had taken place heated like a hot iron applied to so many wounds. His voice trembled as he spoke thus, and his eyes were full of tears.

"Impossible for Honza to have said that!" observed Hannele shaking her head with an air of deep conviction.

"So you do not believe me!" exclaimed Moritz more astonished than angry.

"Impossible for Honza to have said that!" repeated the girl in a low voice, with her eyes cast down before the severe Moritz. Then she went away saying, "I must now go into the inn; there are sure to be some peasants waiting already."

On this she walked slowly towards the house. Moritz in mute astonishment, looked at her as she did so.

To remain a stranger to those even who are very closely related and united to you by ties of blood, is already not so rare a thing. How seldom we understand our own brothers and sisters! We walk side by side with them during a whole lifetime, we take the greatest part in their external sufferings, we feel their misfortunes as keenly as though they were our own; and yet the interior and intellectual portion of their nature, the mysterious action of their inner individuality remain unknown to us, escape us. The paternal roof is as it were too small and too low to allow of our contracting relations with those nearest to us, and we have to leave it and seek close connections among strangers outside. How rarely people find in their own brothers and sisters true friends of heart and soul.

Hannele's brother was among this number. Now only did she take some importance in his eyes, when she had just thrown upon his soul one of those rays which in so vivid a manner lit up the recesses of his heart. Hitherto he had paid no attention to her. In his character of student he had that self-sufficiency which regards with pity the knowledge of others. He had so often heard his father say that a girl has no need to learn any-

thing, that Moritz had ended by thinking thus himself.

He remarked with great astonishment that Hannele knew nothing about anything. He never saw her with a prayer-book in her hands; not even on Saturday. She seemed in general to have nothing *Jewish* about her. On the other hand she knew by heart all the songs sung in the village, and often, in leisure moments, went and sat down in the yard and sang them with her fresh voice. One day Moritz found her singing one of those songs in which an unhappy lover expresses so touchingly the regret he feels at the departure of his betrothed, who has gone beyond the mountains. It ran thus:

Horo, horo, vysokâ jsi!
Ma panenko vzdâlena jsi!
Vzvâlena jsi za harama
Vadne lazka mezi na ma.*

For some seconds Moritz listened to the sad melody of this song; it seemed to him strange, almost unbecoming in his sister's mouth.

"Who taught you that," he asked with an air of severity.

"I have heard it sung by the girls and young men of the village," was Hannele's reply.

"And do you know the meaning of it?"

* Mountain, mountain you are so distant!
My darling how far away are you!
She is far beyond the mountain;
Love is withering between us.

"Don't I know Bohemian? You are going to teach me, perhaps?"

"You ought not to sing that song; it is not suited to a Jewish girl."

"But they sung it in the village." She gave no other excuse.

"That is the very reason."

"But I like the song."

She then sang the next verse.

A thousand other things in the house unsettled our Moritz. He had reached that point in his intellectual existence at which the soul gets ready beforehand, on entering the high road of life, to hate or to love. The unhappy fire had had one effect in somewhat deranging the Randar's fortune, and now it had another in deeply influencing the thoughts and sentiments of Moritz, his hatred and his affection. Armed so to say with all this, he prepared for battle.

His father's conduct in particular completely puzzled him. He had expected to see him irritated, profoundly afflicted by Waczlaw's infernal project; and he found him the same as formerly. Still, as before with his phylacteries on his head and round his arms, he walked every morning amongst the peasants; he spoke to them with no particular severity, and nothing appeared to indicate that he wished to break off his ancient relations with them. The peasants continued to call him

Pan Schmull, they pushed their glasses together when he said his prayers. His father's indifference would at one time have seemed sublime to Moritz; but an evil voice now whispered to him that this admirable indifference was not real—he looked upon it as feigned.

Moritz reflected on his parents' relations with the village; they were in his eyes odd, strange. At first he was inclined to attribute everything to the dull peasants; he put it all down to their evil disposition, which led them doubtless to hate the Jew. But soon his heart shrank from this unjust accusation. Whence, nevertheless, did the peasants get this secret aversion? Why were they always spying, why that malicious joy? Where lay the roots of this trunk?

Assuredly not in religion. Did not his father pray in the midst of them? Were not signs of the cross made freely before every one. Moritz felt rather than expressed the conviction that religion did not estrange men. Did this estrangement exist then, because his father was in better circumstances than they? Did it proceed from envy? Yet there were peasants in the village, who, if they counted up all their possessions, could show themselves equal to the Randar. And moreover, they were proprietors. This could not be said of his father. More than one peasant for the rest was envied in the village; but this envy had

not the same character, as the feeling which existed towards his parents.

There was yet another thing between religion on the one hand, and envy on the other;, this was his father's intellectual superiority. In this superiority, Moritz discovered the cause of the whole evil, and the keystone of his reflections. There was nothing in common between his father and the peasants; the intermediary link was wanting. His father was sensible, thoughtful, prudent; the peasants on the contrary were dull, negligent, narrow-minded. How with such opposite characters could they agree together, and like one another?

"If the Jews were a little less intelligent, and the peasants a little more so," he thought, "it would be better for both. The true secret of accord would then have been found."

But how to bring this about? Is it possible, suddenly to make men descend from an intellectual and commercial elevation which they have long maintained? Is it possible on the other hand to raise others to this height, so that they may be on a level? How could this be done without appearing to use constraint?

Moritz could not describe his parents' situation, and their relations with the village. He began by having doubts as to his father's naïveté and simplicity. His nature seemed now to Moritz to be

double. When with the peasants, he was indifferent, drank out of the same glass as they, and prayed in the midst of them; but at the bottom of his heart he despised them.

His father one day himself confirmed this idea. They were standing together before the new granary which was nearly finished. For some time past already, the traditional bouquet of flowers, offered by the builders, had been lying on the roof. Here and there the lattice-work was covered with tiles.

"You are right," said Moritz, "to have the new granary built in stone and tiled."

"Why?"

"It will not now so quickly fall a prey to the flames."

"You think so?" said the Randar with a peculiar smile, such as Moritz had never before remarked in him; "to-morrow perhaps, and while I am indoors they will set fire to the house. I distrust the peasants."

Reciprocal mistrust, then? On which side was it most deeply rooted?

XI.—The Patronal Fete.

Each stone which helped to reconstruct the new granary seemed successively to take with it a part of the existence of the Randar's wife. Often she

observed as she looked at the growing edifice, that she should consume no more corn than would be stored therein next summer; and when people tried to make her banish the gloomy notions, she shook her head, saying—

"The peasant Waczlaw has taken charge of me!"

Frequently, she could not for several days together leave her bed; and often Moritz turned away, his eyes full of tears, at the sight of the continual progress made by his mother's illness. His soul was then a prey at once to grief and rage.

Meanwhile the patronal *fête* had arrived. The floors were cleaned, the branched candlesticks adorned with candles, and above all the bottles were filled. Moritz even in the depths of his anguish could not help reflecting that it was strange his father, a Jew, should have to celebrate the *fête* of a Catholic saint.

The day before, Hannele was sitting in the garden, humming the melody of one of the village songs which were always on her lips. Suddenly something moved behind a tree. Turning her eyes that way she saw Honza, with pale features and neglected exterior.

"Ah!" he said with a deep sigh; "I am here at last."

"But where have you come from?" asked Hannele in alarm.

"Not so loud," he said trembling, and looking around with fear. "I may be seen."

"What would it matter?"

"I am not permitted to show myself. Is your brother here?"

"What do you want him for?"

"Nothing—I should not have liked him to be here. You are the only person I speak to. I came across the fields so as not to have to go through the village. Even my mother does not know where I am."

"She will be pleased," said Hannele, "that you have come to see her for the holiday."

"A nice holiday," replied Honza laughing bitterly. "The father in prison, the mother penniless, and the son forced to hide himself! Wherever I hear a fiddle I have to make my escape; so now I have come to say good bye for a long time."

"But where are you going?" asked Hannele in a low voice.

"I am going to Prague for two years, after which I shall probably enter the seminary of Leitmeritz. Quite six years will pass before you see me again."

"You will be sorry to stay away, shall you not?"

Hannele and Honza had hitherto spoken with eyes lowered; but at this last question Honza raised his head. Their eyes met, and Hannele's cheeks turned purple.

"Whether I shall or not," said Honza, in an undertone, "I must go. If I had only"—

"What?" asked Hannele, immediately.

"I cannot tell you."

"Oh, yes," insisted the girl, "you can easily tell *me*."

"True," said Honza, a little vexed; "I need not be reserved with *you*: no, there is no shame in confiding it to you. Well, I must go away, but I have no money. My mother is not in a position to give me any."

"Do you want a large sum, Honza?"

"A little more than twenty florins."

Hannele reflected a moment; then she cried all at once—

"Set your mind at rest, I will get you the twenty florins."

"You?"

This doubt on the part of Honza frightened Hannele. But she at once returned—

"Yes, I will get them; do you want more?"

"You?" repeated Honza, his face shone with joy.

Hannele was now several times called in the house; and during the intervals, cries of despair were heard. Hannele shuddered; she hastily picked up her handkerchief, which she had dropped, and departed, saying as she went—

"I must go now. Come here to-morrow at the

same time, and you shall have the money you need. Set your mind at rest, and join the holiday people."

Thereupon she returned precipitately to the house. Behind her Honza's eyes shone like luminous rays of the sun. When she had disappeared from his sight he wiped his forehead and then went slowly back across the fields.

On entering the house Hannele found everything upside down. The Randar's wife had all at once fallen mortally ill. Her condition was worse than ever, she was expected every moment to expire. A doctor had been sent for in all haste. In the yard a servant was harnessing the horses to go to the neighbouring ghetto and find the *good women*. The shadows of death were gradually spreading over the house.

She raised herself with a groan when the *good women* arrived. They were robust creatures who knew how to deal with death. They entered the room noisily; the Randar's wife who heard them asked them at once to approach, the moment having come. The doctor in his turn arrived. He declared the patient's strength to be exhausted, and recommended that perfect silence should be kept around her; no one was to utter in her presence the least cry. Thereupon everything became still in the house; death ran about on tip-toe?

During the whole night the sick woman struggled with death. Her soul could not easily

quit the body in which it was so firmly fixed. It was only towards morning that she became calmer. The *good women* who during the night had been saying prayers for the dead with her were fatigued, and wanted a little rest. The Randar's wife herself now slumbered in a sleep so light that it might have been that of a healthy person!

At this moment the patronal *fête* commenced in the village.

From all sides shoals of pilgrims arrived. Before them floated red banners. Music resounded; and from the inn one could hear very distinctly the melodies of the singers, and the voice of the crowd, which sang in its turn. During the intervals bells were rung and a cannon roared. The mountains and valleys were as though drunk with animation. Everything seemed to raise its voice in praise of the holy patron of the Church. Then the village became silent once more. Divine service had just begun. From time to time a little bell tinkled, or the crowd in prayer chanted loudly, the noise resounding like the waves of an agitated sea. The strains of an organ, trumpet, and cymbals, putting forth all their strength, endeavoured to outdo the feeble voices of the people.

It was at this moment that the Randar's wife awoke. She saw no one at her side but Moritz, who was sitting at the foot of the bed with his

arms folded, full of mute anguish. In a very low voice she uttered his name; he got up hastily.

"There are still many things I should like to say to you," she said feebly.

Moritz implored her not to exert herself.

"One word more," she said, smiling sadly; "silence will not prevent my dying. But first of all, I wish to know one thing."

"What is it, my dear, good mother?"

"Whether you will remain a good Jew all your life?"

"I swear to you"—

His mother for a long time gazed upon his face, which was inundated with tears; then she said, "Now give me your host's letter; it is there, under the pillow. It has caused me much grief."

"But do I not know the contents?" Moritz hazarded.

"Obey, my child," she said, with impatience; "would you like it to get into your father's hands?"

Weeping aloud, Moritz precipitated himself before her. He had appreciated, as he could not have failed to do, this last mark of maternal love.

It was noon. The sermon was over, and indulgences had been granted to all who had come so far to glorify the saint. After Divine service the people marched in procession before the Jew's

house, and in a few moments the public room of the inn was encumbered with thirsty guests. Between the Church and the necessaries of life there was now no longer any distance. The priest and the Randar each held one end of the festival; to the former belonged the morning, to the latter the afternoon—the much more important part.

At first the Randar was resolved to forego the profits attached to the patronal fete. As his wife was dying, he wished to receive nobody. But he was too weak to resist a whole population eager for wine and pleasure. All he could do was to give way in despair. Hannele had now to tear herself from her mother's bedside to serve customers. The Randar went about entreating each person apart to make no noise; but his words were lost in the general intoxication and joy.

The musicians now arrived: nothing more was needed! The Randar had ordered them several days in advance; but to-day he did not want to let them play. Already, however, they had entered. Then the son of the mayor of the place, the wild Pawel, cried to them, "Play all the same," and threw them some bright silver pieces. The Randar lost his temper, and exclaimed on his side, "I will not allow it." But Pawel repeated to the musicians his invitation to perform a dance, and pushed away the robust Randar. The loud trumpet first showed itself a rebel; it began to

sound in the midst of the general conversation, and then in turn the violins, violincellos, and clarionets, after some delay, followed its example. The discordant sounds were repeated; but at last the instruments were in harmony, and the wild Pawel opened the dance.

Moritz, who had not quitted his mother's bed, allowed maledictions to escape him amid his tears and prayers. He cursed his father's occupation, which would not even suffer his mother to die in peace. What a contrast in his eyes between these passionate sounds and the condition of her soul!

As to Hannele, she went backwards and forwards between her brother and father, thinking always of Honza. She thought of the twenty florins she had promised him, and of the joy the money would give him. Her soul was divided between satisfaction and grief.

Towards evening the sum was got together; she had taken it from the day's receipts.

Hannele profited by a moment when the tumult was at its height in the public room of the inn. Pawel, quite drunk, had taken the partner of another man, and the latter would not permit it. Then had followed one of those quarrels, accompanied by blows, which had long been well known in the Randar's house. She ran into the garden; there she found Honza lying on the grass and awaiting her arrival.

"Have you been here long?" she asked, quite out of breath.

"I knew very well you would come."

"Catch hold; there is your money—it is not a farthing short."

She threw him a purse containing the twenty florins. As she did so her cheeks were burning and her hand trembled.

"You lend it me willingly?"

"Take it and hide it," she said, in great fear.

"Does your father know?"

Hannele uttered a cry, and covered her face in shame, and, without replying to this question, ran back into the house.

Her interview with Honza had cost Hannele her mother's last moments. The Randar's wife had wished to *benschen* her; but she had not been present, and when she returned to the public room, where now, amid the music and quarrelling, could be heard the lamentations of her father and the rest of the household, the Randar's wife had expired. The *good women* were already preparing to lay the corpse on the ground.

The Randar now felt himself to possess superhuman strength for putting down the tumult of the patronal *fete*. Blood had just been flowing; for the wild Pawel had been wounded in the temple with a beer-glass. It was, therefore, easier

to overcome the assembly. The music ceased, and little by little the room became empty.

Now the dead could rest in peace.

XII.—Characteristic Signs.

The Randar's wife had been sleeping many years in the cemetery of Münchengratz amongst those of her children who had gone before her to the next world. Her tomb, surmounted by a white stone, is distinguishable from all the others. Moritz whenever he went from the ghetto to his father's house had to pass this tomb, and he could never keep back his tears. He recalled the poetic legend about Benjamin's mother.

"It was not for nothing," he thought, "that she was called Rachel; her tomb, like that of the patriarch's wife, lies on the road traversed by her child, and in me she loved her Benjamin. When for the first time the Jews had to quit the Holy Land, captive and loaded with chains, Rachel was seen standing upright by her tomb, making a sign to them and bidding them farewell as she wept. Heaven grant that the shade of my mother may never have cause to be irritated with me, and punish me for having wished to expel myself, as it were, from the land of my faith! I will ever remain true to her last words."

Meanwhile the Randar's house had greatly

changed. The angel of grief reposed there as amid ruins. The gaiety of former days had disappeared. The Randar had become taciturn and melancholy. It is true that still every Friday he could be seen at his gate awaiting the arrival of the *schnorrer*, like Abraham that of the angels. But in the evening when the radiant Sabbath had returned, one no longer heard the joyous laughter of former times. The *schnorrer* in vain told the pleasantest stories, in vain talked on at their ease; Rebb Schmull listened without unwrinkling his brow. He did not even show any longer his ancient sympathy for his Polish friends; and the Emperor Nicholas, his deadly enemy, might now, as he often said, do whatever pleased his fancy, and send all the Jews to Siberia without disturbing the Randar.

"This house is unrecognisable," said the *schnorrer* on Sunday when they started on their way, "and Rebb Schmull is not the same man."

As soon, moreover, as they found a better road, they abandoned the old one; and thus the mendicants neglected the Randar's house. They preferred to go two leagues further on Saturday in order to pass that of another Randar. Even the beggar hardly likes to rejoice in the shadow of melancholy.

For the rest, if the Randar's house was thus deserted the fact was, in a great measure, due to Hannele. She received the poor haughtily and with an imperious air. By her words, as by her

actions, she made them feel their inferiority. All this gained her a bad renown for several leagues round. When speaking of her the *schnorrer* said that she had not in her veins a drop of her excellent mother's blood. Among the things a Jew least readily forgives his coreligionary are haughtiness and disdain.

The fortune of the house had also undergone changes. Rebb Schmull had suffered considerable losses; his name of former days, *the village Rosthchild,* could no longer be applied to him as justly as before.

Sudden poverty, the unexpected crumbling of an existence hitherto full of all that constitutes happiness in life, affects us much more deeply, from a moral point of view, than when we see ruin threatening us from a distance, and advancing step by step; when we hear each day, nay, each hour, the sound of the worm which is openly gnawing our edifice.

What had contributed not a little to hasten the Randar's misfortunes was the loss of the old Count, who, some years after the death of the Randar's wife, had succumbed to a terrible attack of apoplexy. This was another friend the less.

Rebb Schmull no longer at the end of each quarter, as before, had his carriage got ready to take him to his gracious lordship's house, so that he might in person pay the rent of the farm. He

had now to do with a powerful deputy whom the young Count had sent from Vienna. The day after this deputy's arrival Rebb Schmull had hastened to drive to the castle, where the newcomer resided in the old proprietor's place; that to begin with displeased the Randar. But what annoyed him still more was to see the powerful deputy, when Rebb Schmull gave his name—usually so graciously welcomed at the castle—receive him with the most bureaucratic politeness, and not even ask him to take a seat.

"You have your own carriage?" he inquired, as by chance he looked out of the window under which he observed the conveyance.

The Randar answered in the affimative with a humble smile.

"Very well," said the powerful deputy.

The tone in which he pronounced these two words and the gesture with which he accompanied them were indescribable. Thereupon he began to talk of tenure and rent, and seemed as though he would never come to an end. Rebb Schmull did not understand a word of all this torrent of language, of which the conclusion was, that the existing conditions would no longer as hitherto suit the proprietor. He intimated in short that the rent would have to be raised if Rebb Schmull intended to remain, for already some one else with an affection for the place had come forward. The

last explanation Rebb Schmull had perfectly comprehended; it was very clear. When the powerful deputy had done, Rebb Schmull, trembling with emotion, said—

"Sir, what another person offers Rebb Schmull can offer also."

And he made a bow.

On the road he reproached himself with having been too proud with the powerful deputy. He believed that if he had shown himself more humble and had spoken less loudly he would have been better received. It occurred to him that had he not gone to the castle in his carriage the powerful deputy would have said nothing about raising the rent. What had wounded him above all was having to stand before this employé.

"Did I not always when I went there sit on the sofa by the side of his lordship?" he said, complaining bitterly; "and a man like that, who has been a junior clerk, lets me stand upright before him as though I were a peasant! Oh, what times we live in!"

Some days afterwards the Randar paid another visit to the powerful deputy. This time he had left his carriage at home and had come to the castle on foot. He had even taken off his massive gold signet ring which had not left his finger for forty years; he feared lest perhaps the too brilliant metal might not match the humility of his deportment.

Moritz, who now after his fourth year of medicine was at home for the vacation, wanted to accompany his father to the castle. On the road the Randar communicated to him the means by which he was going to try to make the powerful deputy *bend* and not raise the rent.

"And if he will accept nothing?" asked Moritz, astonished at the frankness with which his father had revealed his plan to him.

"Him accept nothing!" said the Randar quite calmly, and with an air of almost conviction. "I tell you that he would accept even plunder from the *misbeach*."*

They had just reached the castle. Moritz remained outside while Rebb Schmull crossed the large courtyard in the humblest attitude and bareheaded, in spite of a tropical sun. The sight of this humility, prepared in some sort beforehand, deeply affected the soul of the Randar's son.

"Why such humility?" thought Moritz, looking at his father while the latter went along. "Why not go in naturally with head erect? The Jew possesses a secret which has been discovered; he is sure that to find favour before a judge he must go in with his back bent and his eyes cast down. The secret is known! But is not the Jew told every day that he must behave thus? People do not want him to be otherwise. There is

* Altar.

my father going quite tranquilly to commit an act of corruption. Is it not a horrible thing; but whose fault is it?"

After Moritz had been waiting a quarter of an hour, buried the whole time in deep reflection, Rebb Schmull returned. His face was troubled and pale; he held his hands behind his back like a man exhausted with fatigue. His eyes haggard, he passed his son without noticing him.

"Well, father?" asked Moritz.

Rebb Schmull, before replying, looked back to see if he was far enough from the powerful deputy's presence; then he said with anger—

"He would accept nothing."

"Did I not say so?" inquired Moritz, in an almost joyful tone; "you would not believe me."

"Fine reasoning," said the Randar bitterly. "Do you not see then that it involves our livelihood?"

"It does not," replied Moritz with vivacity; "you will always be free from want even after having to give up the occupation of Randar. Must you then sell beer and brandy on credit? Can you not take farm land and get your living by that? It is precisely your present profession which puts you in such sad relations with the peasants. When your grange had been set fire to was there one who would put out the flames?"

Rebb Schmull threw a piercing glance at his son.

"I am not in need of advice," he said; "I can do without yours. No! my deadliest enemy would not counsel me otherwise. I will not leave the house, and if a thousand other powerful deputies wanted me to go out I would still refuse. Do you think I will so readily quit the place where I was born and brought up, where my father and my *Dede* * lived and grew old? My most bitter enemy alone would advise me to do so. Ah! rather than that I will pay six times as much rent."

This love for the natal soil, this sudden explosion of a mysterious sentiment whose roots lay even in the ground on which his father was born, made our Moritz taciturn and uneasy. Both full of bitter thoughts, they returned to the house.

Hannele shared her father's feelings, and with clasped hands entreated him not to give up his occupation. Here all was so nice! She would not know what to do if he left the house. Then, with a degree of violence which any one will understand who has been able to guess the girl's secret sentiments, she threw herself into an armchair and cried amid sobs—

"I will not go; you can do what you like."

"Little stupid that you are! Who thinks of going?" said the Randar. "Your brother and the deputy would see me do so with pleasure, but it is

* Grandfather.

just for this reason that I shall not. I will pay double sooner."

Hannele rose precipitately, and ran to embrace her father. Moritz, deeply grieved, stood apart from them; it seemed to him that he was nothing to either.

Permit me here to reproduce the flow of thoughts which, forced out by the waves of his soul, had issued from our friend during those years of his existence which we have not depicted. They will enable us to see that his soul, fortified by science and study, had risen high above a host of prejudices. Here are his thoughts as he himself wrote them down:—

"Yesterday evening I saw Hannele lighting two wax tapers. But the first, in giving its luminous kiss to the second, went out itself.

"Will it be thus with the Jewish and Christian religions?

"The assembling of ten persons, each over thirteen years of age, suffices to form a community! And their prayers rise to heaven as efficaciously as though offered up by thousands of men. A wise provision of the Talmud conceived and written under the willows of Babylon!

"Now and then it seems to me that this famous 'state religion' is the right of raising the sword against the other religions which it oppresses.

There is evidently something important in such a state religion. We Jews had one formerly, but in what does it really consist? What attracts to it and keeps to it the majority of the people? Not its dogmas assuredly—these may be obscure, anti-liberal, narrow—but the great freedom of its attitude. A state religion, from a material point of view, is the freest thing imaginable. Has it not freedom when it can plant its crosses, its images of saints, and its statues, at the corner of every street, in every field, before every house; when the priest can without the least opposition bear his crucifix even where this object is regarded with horror; when its processional banners can float everywhere, and its chants everywhere resound?

"It is perfectly natural that a religion, as soon as the state has raised it to the throne, should become hard and intolerant towards the other religions by which it is surrounded. Force always wants to extend and develop itself. A religion which can pray everywhere, plant its banners everywhere, which everywhere is at home, and in its own domains, offers to its partisans a kind of assurance. Hardly one man in a thousand reflects on the spirit and tenor of such and such a point in theology. They ask but one thing; to see this point in theology freely chiselled in all places on stone, declared verbally, represented by pictures,

proclaimed to the sound of music. But this is life itself, for it is liberty.

"(Two days after) What? Will you not efface the preceding lines? As you wrote them was there not perchance the *ecclesia militans* looking over your shoulder. Terrible words!

"The cross standing before the church will soon have to give place to a new one. The Saviour's crown of thorns is quite destroyed, and the rain has almost entirely taken the colour from the drops of blood.

"Will there be a time when crosses will no longer be seen on the earth? People ought not to have crosses made in stone or metal. There is something too rude and rebellious in metal and stone, they are in continual dissension with clemency. The most suitable substance for the purpose is wood; is not wood cut from a reign which is half organic? To get wood, it is necessary first to kill a tree, but this eternal stone which never lived and is never dead, fills me with horror. This stone will be the cause of the cross's existing eternally. But the day a universal peace, a kind of Easter morn comes to lighten the universe, you will see that these living reproaches carved out of stone will want still to make themselves heard. Not stone, pray; wood, that is the proper substance.

"It has rarely happened to me to see in the ghetto

a child—with flowers in its hand. Are the Jews really deprived of the sentiment of nature? With them, even children can do without flowers.

"It is a fine spectacle when on the evening of the new year the father of a family blesses some fruit as first fruit of the earth. The feast of leaves with its verdant huts is a pretty one; no less pretty the feast of weeks, when the synagogue in memory and in honour of the decalogue given on Mount Sinai, is adorned with ornaments from meadows and gardens. . . . *Iom Kippour** is past, *Iom Kippour* that long day of mortification. Without the aid of priest or sacrament, the soul has gained for itself absolution. In heaven the book of sins has been torn up, and the soul can once more rejoice and recommence its pleasures and—its sins. What more natural than the feast of leaves which follows the *Kippour*. Green is the colour of life, green the delight of the eyes. The mortifications of the *Kippour* will disappear amid the noisy pleasures of the leaves.

"I remain with you charming feast! Before it begins what a joyous uproar in the ghetto! Here are peasants bringing leaves and branches from the forest, they know perfectly well when the Jews will give themselves up to rejoicing. How some buy, how others sell; how all are pressing around these decorations from the forest. What I like above

* Feast of expiations.

all here is the children. They are truly in their place. With the foliage on their heads and under their arms, the little boys and girls run across the streets. These tall, old houses, with the numerous families they contain seem to laugh and grow young again. Now the *soukes** are erected. Every child brings a treasure amassed beforehand of apples, nuts, or cut paper to adorn the walls. It is at this time that walking vendors of pictures do most business. The little ones will spend their last halfpenny on bits of coloured cardboard. Here foliage is spread out on which shine and scintillate stars of gold, long paper chains and little coloured lamps. Now the mother and father come to look at the children's work, that is to say the magnificence of the foliage and the mural ornamentation. Sometimes the father himself seizes the hatchet, and with this instrument does a little carpentering, and completes the scene. I like to see that, father. That hand which is accustomed to the ell or the rabbit skin, ought not to forget how to use the hatchet.

"The huts are finished now. Spirit of the feast you may enter.

"Did Moses really wish with the aid of these huts to perpetuate the memory of the forty years passed in the desert? Or did he know the spirit of his

* Huts.

nation, which from making bricks and hewing stone had become rude and hard like the stone itself; and was that why he sought to refresh this spirit under the green boughs of huts? What has made him everywhere recommend agriculture in such express terms? *Recommend* agriculture? but that terrifies me. Doubtless it also terrified the prophet, for in descending the mountain his face shining as a result of his divine mission, he saw the people dancing round a golden idol. Ploughs are not made of gold—that is why the prophet feared. The people thought it was the golden calf he was afraid of, but what frightened him was the gold.

"To the feast of leaves still belong the *Loulew** and the *Esrog*.† The ghetto has its merchants who occupy themselves with buying and selling these articles. These merchants are usually beadles and booksellers. The land of the *Esrog* is in Asia Minor —the Ionian Islands; and it is perfumed like the Song of Solomon, whom it also is impossible to conceive elsewhere than under the Eastern sky.

"Formerly we had all that in our own country, in the land of the cedars of Lebanon. We both sowed and reaped everything ourselves. All grew in abundance, and increased under the beautiful Eastern sky. Now we have to buy everything—strange hands gather the fruit for us.

"Touching is the solicitude with which an *Esrog* of this kind is surrounded! It must not present the least defect; otherwise it is a sin to use it. Rich people make a parade of it. They have silver boxes in which they lay this beautiful fruit on a soft bed of flax. In the synagogue during the great *Hosannah* the *Loulew* as well as the *Esrog* is shaken with mystic movements. There is then such a rustling and agitation of leaves, that it would be possible to imagine oneself in the midst of a forest! Add to this the magnificent language of Sion resounding on every side. The whole East speaks, exhales itself and moves around us.

"How can it matter what ideal exists in the mind of a man or of an entire nation, provided it edifies? What though the Jerusalem of the Jew consisted in that beautiful blue flower, full of perfume which he sees beyond so much dirt and vermin, so much ruined masonry and disgusting traffic, bloom above his head in incomparable beauty, and to which nothing could attain! And if the tenderest threads of his thought, the most secret fibres of his soul lived in the midst of its perfumes? Would you deprive him of it? Only children and Mendel Wilna could still believe in a rebuilding of Jerusalem. It is their Christmas night: so snatch it from the thoughts, the sentiments and the hopes of *your* children!

"Would my father be a less excellent village mayor if he did not feel so lively a joy at the sight of a little *earth* from Jerusalem?

"The Sabbath was instituted with such a special view to agriculture, that I cannot feel too surprised at its still being maintained among us in face of a vocation altogether opposed thereto. I mean commerce. This mute and absolute repose, these hands so completely intended for rest that they are forbidden to light a fire, agree perfectly with an upturned plough and a sickle in repose. You ought, the Holy Scriptures say, to rest from your labours! But commerce is not a labour; the word itself indicates this. The word *merchant* allows us to suppose an activity of a somewhat intellectual character. But perhaps the Sabbath has among us fallen into that altogether Puritan mutism, because there has been a fear lest commerce might not keep our lips shut close enough, and lest the eyes which see the bag of money might command our hands to seize it.

"Do not the English also observe a most rigorous Sabbath? It is precisely with commercial nations that it ought to take this form and these features.

"It is not permitted to torment a swallow. At the time of the death of Jerusalem the swallows brought water and wanted to put out the flames

which were devouring the temple. On the Sabbath it is forbidden to pluck a flower; the perfume, even, of a freshly plucked flower must not be. Among the creatures which have to be left in repose on Saturday are comprised the beasts themselves. 'Have pity on everything that possesses life,' is often said in the ghetto to children who are just going to kill a mouse or a frog. Everything that possesses life has everywhere a right to respect. All over the ghetto reigns regard, compassion, which must not be confounded with the regard and compassion of the Egyptians or of the Indians. What people wish to treat with regard is the creature and not the maker or the soul of the beast subject to metempsychosis—God is great, but His prophet also—

"I do not complain that our most natural rights are mutilated and enchained. Policy has many other sins on its conscience besides. But we ought never to have been deprived of the right of proprietorship. Natural history and botany should be taught first of all in Jewish schools. If people do not wish to play with flowers, if you are not allowed to hear the silent growth of plants in fields and gardens, these things ought at least to be learnt from books. Books are not always withered herbs. One may see flowers, leaves, and fruits bud in them.

"What is wanting to our religion is the feminine

element. Looking rigorously at the matter it seems that women have no place therein. Miriam, Deborah, and Judith ought to occupy a higher rank in the religion and to animate it more. I have seen no *Maria* in it; but I always wondered why Moses, to whom his mother and sister must have revealed so many noble feminine sentiments, gave the subject so little attention. He ought to have instituted priestesses just as he instituted priests and Levites. Then would have disappeared some of that stiffness which is only now beginning to bend. Women know how to soften everything; they would have handled this hard matter and have physically mollified it. As it is, the Jewish religion is only for men."

XIII.—Hannele.

The peasant Waczlaw had already been some years out of prison. His long detention had made him an old man, who was formerly so robust. The Randar was terrified when he saw him again for the first time. His hair was grey, and he walked with that trailing gait which convicts retain long after their liberation. Profound pity filled Rebb Schmull's excellent heart. It seemed to him that Waczlaw had sufficiently expiated his fault. Moritz had been less ready to pardon him. He had constantly before his eyes the burnt granary and his

mother's death. He was still at Prague preparing for his last medical examination, the most difficult of all. It cost him time and trouble to pass it.

Just after Honza had been ordained a priest he had the opportunity of being appointed to a neighbouring village where a recent death had left the post vacant. He now often went to see his parents who had been restored to a kind of ease. Old Waczlaw had renounced drink; his son had really spread over him a sort of blessedness.

Those who know our Randar will certainly not be surprised when we tell them that this change gave him the greatest and sincerest pleasure.

It is a remarkable peculiarity in the Jew that a good child who has become an honest man seems to him the happiest thing for a parent's heart. As his own existence is limited to family joys, he can for that very reason appreciate such a heavenly blessing in the home of others.

The lustre shed upon the peasant's son made Rebb Schmull quite forget the misdeed of his father. He knew not how to express his joy when one day he received an unexpected visit from the young priest. Hannele had to produce the very best the house contained in the way of wine and pastry. She went to and fro with haste as though a god who had taken a human form were being entertained. Soon she appeared completely out of

breath, her flushed face betraying her sentiments. She placed the wine before him together with a plate containing some of the well-known *white bread* of the *Sabbath*. The young priest broke off a piece of *barches* and smiled as he held it between his fingers.

"Do you still remember, Fraülein," he said to Hannele, "who used always to await this bread with such impatience?"

"Do not speak of that, reverend sir," said Hannele, in a low voice.

For some time past the priest had been in the habit of calling often at the house. He always received the same welcome. On these occasions Hannele was full of gaiety; she joked with the peasants, though if a *schnorrer* presented himself she had harsh words for him.

The mysterious problem of the girl's life was almost solved.

For the rest the priest's frequent visits shocked nobody. It was not rare to see even the authorities come and regale themselves with the wine and delicacies supplied by the *Rosthchild of the village.* So the priest also could go to the Jew's house. In no matter what circumstances, people pardon a false step provided the person who has taken it does not seek to leave his sphere; and the position of the Jews is still so isolated in our country that no one could dream that the young priest wanted

anything at the Randar's house but a glass of beer and a little Sabbath bread.

The priest now came also when the Randar was not at home. A secret messenger seemed to tell him whenever this would be the case; then he entered softly without making himself heard, and suddenly came face to face with the girl, who invariably blushed to the white of her eyes. The first time Hannele found herself alone with him she felt a kind of terror at her father's absence; then shortly afterwards she was delighted to be able to chat alone with the ecclesiastic. While they were talking of unimportant things they often looked towards the door to see if the Randar was coming; and directly anything stirred in the house Hannele trembled. Then the priest rose and assumed the attitude of one preparing to take leave.

Hannele might have been married long ago. Excellent offers for his daughter had been made to Rebb Schmull; but here also, in spite of everything, his old carelessness had again asserted itself. Hannele herself had always objections to make, of which the most important was that her father could not do without her in business. Meanwhile she had attained the age of twenty-four, and Rebb Schmull himself began to see that Hannele was on the point of becoming an "old maid." But one day a man arrived from Bunzlau whom Hannele, although he did not want

to say what was the object of his visit, at once knew to be a *schadschan.** The father remained shut up with him for more than an hour in an adjoining room, speaking in a very low voice as if of a very important matter. During this time Hannele went about the house; she greatly feared that this visit had something to do with her. In the end she could not resist a desire to listen at the door. This is what she heard.

"You will not be able to find a better match," said the *schadschan;* "in all Bohemia your daughter's fortune will be envied!"

"But if she does not care for him?" said Rebb Schmull.

"She has only to look at him," replied the *schadschan;* "he is a superb young man."

"Well, so be it," said the Randar, after some moments' silence, during which they seemed to have been reflecting.

"*Masel tof,* then," ("good luck") cried the *schadschan,* "let your daughter prepare to receive him; he will come and see you during *Holemoed.*"

Hannele left the door, tottering. She now knew that she was being discussed. All day long she went about the house with humid eyes. The *schadschan* stayed to dinner, and when he and the Randar remarked the sadness of the girl who touched nothing at table they laughed in

* Matrimonial agent.

their sleeve. They took for virginal modesty what was the mute explosion of an inclination rooted in the lowest depth of her soul.

After dinner Rebb Schmull accompanied the *schadschan* on his return beyond the village. As he was going out he said, laughing, to Hannele—

"Do you know who will come to see us during *Holemoed?*"

"It matters little!" was the reply.

"It will matter to you later on," said Rebb Schmull, with a peculiar smile; and he went off with his companion. Hannele remained drowned in tears.

On this very day the priest came to pay a visit. He found the girl in one of the saddest humours. He asked her the reason; she replied weeping.

"So I am nothing more to you?" inquired the priest, in a low voice. "Do you forget the twenty florins?"

Hannele replied with violence—

"I ought not to have given you that money, your reverence. It was very wrong of me,—and my mother died the same instant."

"Do you wish me to return the money?"

"No."

"And why not?"

"I made you a present of it at the time."

"Presents of such sums are not made without a cause—especially by your people."

As Hannele had kept silent after this remark, the priest continued, and while he spoke his voice became more and more animated and insinuating.

"Is that what you call doing wrong?" he cried, "What madness! Doing wrong! It was the expansion of a pure and innocent heart. Why, then, was it to you alone that I communicated my wants? and did you not at once try to relieve me? Is that what you call doing wrong? It was pity, and this precious sentiment the Creator spreads in the hearts of those He loves. You had compassion on an unfortunate man. Say, have you not always loved me?"

Hannele was seated before the priest, her hands clasped as though in prayer. His words fell upon her like a shower of gold. She dared not raise her eyes nor breathe. The secret of a whole life was now unveiled; it was on the lips of the very person who had just pronounced the word. Henceforth the veil was torn.

But the priest touching her chin with his hand raised Hannele's face, which was covered with blushes, so that she could not look fixedly in his eyes; then placing his right hand on her head he said—

"Maiden, it is in the heart of our Lord and Saviour that the Almighty has shed most pity; that is why, too, He is seated at His side and is called His well-beloved Son. Your compassion for

me was truly Christian like; and for this reason you will find true felicity. But to this end I will aid you; otherwise I should commit the sin of allowing a soul to lose heaven."

The ecclesiastic thought he had expressed himself very clearly; but in spite of this Hannele had not understood his words. He still spoke at great length of eternal salvation and of the Divine mercy which leads thereto; he spoke from the bottom of his heart, he was moved. At this moment the Randar's footsteps were heard, and the important interview had, for the present at least, to be terminated.

It is impossible for us to find in the book of Honza's past life a page to justify his conduct of that day. We can only very rapidly turn over the leaves of this book, hurried as we are by the whirlwind of a story impatient to arrive at its end. Nevertheless, despite the pages which are wanting, the reader will understand the sense. There are some books whose end, middle, and beginning, each taken apart, form a whole, no matter which portion one reads first.

It was only during the night, and when sleep had fled from her, that Hannele recalled the priest's words. They resounded in her one after another, like so many detached notes. She now gathered the complete meaning of his speech; she must embrace the Christian religion and be baptized.

And but five paces from her slept her father, tranquil and firm in his faith!

The priest's visits to the Randar's house now became more frequent than ever; he was almost a daily guest there. Each new visit let fall, as it were, into the girl's open soul a drop of the new faith. The floor on which the old faith had walked became more and more rotten, and Honza could clearly foresee the precise moment when it would give way, and when the kingdom of the new religion would receive her into its bosom.

Rebb Schmull had no suspicion of the abyss on the brink of which his daughter stood.

It is easy enough to explain how the young priest advanced step by step towards his object. His chief argument consisted in proving to her that she had always been a Christian. As regards points of doctrine properly so called she made no resistance whatever. Honza had now nothing more to think of than how to untie her from the paternal house. With this view he had to sever fibre after fibre, and, as he did so, he saw the girl's soul bleed as it were under his hands. He was often obliged to acknowledge how difficult it is to tear such Jewish souls from their ties, however slight.

Hannele went to and fro like a shadow. She now cared but very little for her business; the priest had made her take an aversion to it. Rebb

Schmull attributed this to the marriage project, and showed himself very indifferent. Hannele's situation excited the priest's pity, but he deemed it necessary; for therefrom was to bloom for her the flower of true salvation.

Meanwhile the feast of the new year had come round. As always, the spirit of such days reigned throughout the house. It was Hannele's bad genius which on this occasion kept the priest far from the inn, for certainly he would now have met with resistance, nay, possibly a complete revulsion in her whom he wished to convert. Believe it or not; but the various kinds of cooking and other preparations for the feast attracted her anew to the lap of her ancient faith. When she took her father's holiday clothes out of the cupboard she moistened them with tears. She did not see Honza again till the next day. She once more listened to him. The house had resumed its usual aspect. Meanwhile the day was approaching on which the intended would come from Bunzlau for a matrimonial interview. Hannele grew more and more frightened; it now wanted but fifteen days to the Tabernacles. When she thought herself far from all spectators she often clasped her hands in a doleful attitude. Sometimes she went out of the village and along the high road to a spot whence could be seen in the cemetery of Münchengratz the white stone over her mother's

tomb. But she neither felt that she was heard nor was she consoled when she had thus confided to the winds her secret sufferings. The Almighty had left her soul; nevertheless she wished to make a new god enter therein. As a nettle is often seen to join another nettle and form a chain of prickles, so here were fastened together in one knot her Maker, her lover, and her fear. This knot could be undone but by one resolution.

XIV.—Iom Kippour.

The return of her brother from Prague, where he had been successful in obtaining his diploma, made no change in Hannele's situation. There were now two more eyes in the house; as to her, she hardly dared look up. And still she had committed no sin.

The "doctor's" arrival did not cause too much surprise or movement in the house; they had been prepared for it long beforehand. Doubtless it would have been very different if the Randar's wife had still been living. She would thus have seen gloriously realized the sole dream of her existence! The Randar's joy sprang merely from the fact that Moritz had passed his examination. He was glad that these fourteen years, which had cost him so much money, had at length come to an end.

"What are you going to do now?" he asked Moritz before he had been home an hour.

"Cure the sick," replied the doctor smiling.

"But where?"

"I do not know yet. In any case I am a doctor."

"Magnificent result!" cried the Randar with a very serious air; "study fourteen years and then not even know what to do! If our patriarch Jacob served fourteen years, he at least knew what awaited him at the end of the time. In no case will I consent to your establishing yourself in the village."

"Why not?"

"Because I do not wish it; I have not spent my money for you to cure Waczlaw or the peasant Pawel, in consideration of a couple of eggs or a sack of potatoes. I will never agree to that."

Moritz made no reply. Immediately on his return home he found staring him in the face the same old prejudices.

The eve of the *Iom Kippour* had arrived. In the house various preparations were taking place. This is a day which comes to surprise the conscience as an armed man surprises the traveller. It cannot be got rid of either by jesting with it or railing at it. Like that bell which pursued the child because he did not wish to hear it, when it

called him to prayers, it follows us everywhere, and wherever it meets a Jewish soul invites it to silence, repose, and meditation. Nor could Moritz withdraw himself from it.

He was able to observe the slow but sure advance of the *Iom Kippour*, it did not lack forerunners. It is a peculiarity in the Jewish feasts that most of them have, like certain stars, an eve and a morrow. First come the preparations, then the rejoicing or mortification, and finally the relaxation.

Early in the morning, after prayers, Rebb Schmull said to Hannele—

"Now try to get dinner over soon to-day, for the *Iom Kippour* does not joke: it is strong enough to kill a giant if the giant has failed to take measures proportionate to its stomach."

Hannele punctually executed all her father's injunctions; she flew to the kitchen and spurred old Channe on. Then from the cupboard she took her father's *sterbkitel*,* which he was going to put on in the evening and wear throughout the next day in the synagogue. She noticed that in one of the sleeves of this funereal garment the lace was unsewn; she took a needle and thread and mended it. As she did so hot tears fell on the cloth.

An hour after the fowls were brought in, and the *kapora* ceremony began.

* Winding-sheet.

Into the principal dwelling-room were called the whole household, with the exception of the Christian servants, male and female. The expiation of all the sins which were to be got rid of on the morrow by prayer and mortification, was now about to take place in a symbolical form. When all had assembled, the Randar glanced round at his assistants, who were ranged in a circle to see if any one was absent. Then he took the prayer-book and began to say aloud the prayer relating to the ceremony. When he arrived at the passage where one casts, so to say, his sins on the creature held in his hands, he took the cock and, turning it round three times over his head, pronounced the customary formula—

"This cock is going to die to expiate my sins."

The whole household did the same, each in turn according to rank and dignity. It was necessary to repeat the prayer to old Channe who did not understand *ivreh*.* She first wiped her face with her sooty apron as though to sanctify herself; yet she knew from long experience how she ought to turn the fowl round above her head. When every one had performed the *kapora* ceremony, the fowls were tied together by the legs, and despatched to the "sacrifier" in the ghetto.

Every one was about to go back to his particular duty when suddenly the door opened, and on the

* Hebrew.

threshold paused with an air of indecision a man in Polish dress, all covered with dust.

"Have I arrived in time for the *kapora?*" asked the new-comer as he looked with a smile at the Randar.

Rebb Schmull for some time looked at the mendicant, who was no other than Mendel Wilna. Then he cried with joyous emotion—

"May I die, if it is not Mendel Wilna!"

"You will live another hundred years yet, for it is indeed I," said the old friend of the house, as he put his hand into that of the Randar, immediately after the loud *Salem alechem* with which the latter had saluted him. Moritz on his side warmly welcomed the mendicant; while as for Hannele, directly she recognised the new guest she fled in terror.

A cock was brought for Mendel Wilna, and he performed the *kapora* ceremony, pronouncing the accustomed formula.

"Well, Rebb Mendel," said the Randar, when the mendicant had taken off his outer garments, "have you not yet done with your journeying? I thought you had long been a sleek, fat man of money."

"Journeying makes us neither fat nor rich, Rebb Schmull," replied the mendicant with a sad smile.

"But what, then, is the object of your travels?" the Randar hastened to say. "At home you have a

wife and children, and might get a living. By your peregrinations you will attain nothing. Already you are no longer a child, Rebb Mendel; and when one is growing old and has his hair turning grey, he ought to walk with his stick in a well-warmed room, and not on the high road."

"Rebb Schmull," returned the mendicant in an accentuated voice as he got up, "the all-powerful Creator who tries the hearts and reins of men is my witness, that it is not to grow rich that I wander all over the world. You are right, Rebb Schmull; at my age I should be permitted to take care of myself. But I am a *schnorrer* to whom people give a piece of bread for the love of Heaven, and who never knows one day where he will sleep the next. But what is my aim on this earth? Money is money; wife and little ones are women and children; I am here below for the sake of Jerusalem."

"He will not renounce his old follies," said the Randar shrugging his shoulders; then he went out.

Moritz sat in silence opposite the unhappy man. He felt sorry for this adventurous visionary who for so many years had been a wreck through this fixed idea, amounting to madness.

"Pardon my father, Rebb Mendel," he said, in a low voice; "pardon the severe words he addressed to you; you know he does not for that reason care less for you."

"Do I not know it?" cried Mendel, in a voice choked with tears. "Heavens! why do I receive these blows from the very persons I love as myself?"

Thereupon he rose suddenly, and took his stick, which was resting against a chair. But he did not keep it in his hand.

"If the *Iom Kippour* were not here," he said, in a hollow voice, "on my life I would not remain in the place another minute. Rebb Schmull, also, is now one of my bitter enemies. Am I not a fool in his eyes? Is not that the name he gave me?"

"We are liable to be thus treated," said Moritz, as though to give him an indirect lesson, "by all those who cannot grasp an idea. The idea strikes them at first, then they examine it, and at last it seems ridiculous to them. And what have you to say, Rebb Mendel, if men of this kind act in such a way towards you? I, for example, shall never pick up a stone towards rebuilding Jerusalem, while nothing will content you but to be its architect."

"No, no," cried the mendicant, taking his stick again, which he pressed violently against his body, "I will not renounce it. Who wishes to tear this purpose from my bosom? The Creator alone can do so, but not you any more than your father."

"And is he not right when he thinks"— Moritz began to say, with a smile; but he had no longer

any desire to smile when he saw the *schnorrer* sink on to a chair and burst into sobs. He sought to calm him.

In the course of the day he told Moritz that the proposition made by him to Rothschild about the rebuilding of Jerusalem had not yet been successful, but he hoped Rothschild would before long send for him, and then the great work could be got on with so much the more quickly.

Meanwhile the morning had passed away. This day the household sat down to table earlier than usual, because three hours later the last meal before the long fast would be taken. At table nothing but the *Iom Kippour* was talked about; to each person this day appeared under a peculiar form. One said, "How many times already have we climbed this mountain?" To which a servant of the house replied:—"What a fuss people make about fasting one *single day;*" saying which he devoured such formidable morsels that Rebb Schmull cried out with a laugh:—"That is doubtless why you take such precautions, my boy!"

As a rule they appointed this long fast with much serenity.

There was joking and raillery in the house although the time was almost one of penitence and mortification. Towards five o'clock the last meal was taken. Now were eaten up as victims the fowls which the same morning had served for

the *kapora*. Already the deepest seriousness reigned on every side. Haste was made to reach the synagogue in time. When they had finished eating, and had *gebenscht*,* they prepared to set out. Before starting Rebb Schmull strongly recommended Hannele to mind the house carefully, so that no one might steal anything, and moreover to pray well. To this end he showed her the prayers for that day and the next. Then Hannele, according to an ancient custom, asked him to pardon her if she had offended him during the year; and on kissing his hand she wept with a degree of violence which she could not explain.

"Well, well," said the Randar, "do not weep so much. If you say your prayers well you will soon have a good husband."

Every one went out and Hannele remained alone in the house. She barricaded all the doors, and moreover shut the public room of the inn, as on this day the peasants could not, by reason of the feast, be served. The silence of death reigned in the Randar's farm. Hannele then took the prayer book and began to say the portion her father had indicated. Before going to the bed she ran quickly to Waczlaw's house over the way, asking him to come and put out the lights, since she was not to-day permitted to touch one. Strange enigma of our soul! Already she bore

* Said grace.

within her perjury and treason to the faith of her fathers, and in spite of this she dared not infringe the slightest of its regulations.

The Randar and Moritz, as well as all who had accompanied them, slept in the ghetto that night as the *Kol Nidrè* had been prolonged till ten o'clock. They would not return before the next evening.

When Hannele, who the next day rose late, found herself all alone, she felt frightened in this deserted house. She dressed herself very quickly and began to pray. But to-day she did not remember what prayers her father had pointed out to her yesterday. She was confused; she thought that if she lighted on a prayer he had not indicated it would be inefficacious. Consequently she preferred not to pray at all. Thus she had nothing to do; and the demons of memory hastened to fill her mind with whatever could divert her from her Maker and her prayers. Like the radiant sun the priest stood before her soul: she grew weary at his absence, she wanted to hear him speak to her again, to contemplate his features. The thought began to dawn upon her that the time and circumstances would be propitious for quitting the paternal house. What would not be Honza's joy when she suddenly went to him, faithful and obedient to his instructions?

Every moment she expected to see him arrive.

Did he not know indeed that to-day she was alone? And in her ardent desire to see him again everything about him seemed to her reasonable and true. It was only now that she knew it; and she wished to belong to him.

Towards noon she went to the house of Honza's parents under some frivolous pretext, to see if he was there. She found them at table; the family must have become comfortable in circumstances, for there was wine before them. Waczlaw was greatly surprised that the Fraülein should have come to visit them to-day, the *long day;* Hannele replied that she had felt frightened. As she looked at what was on the table, old Waczlaw, who had noticed her, said:—

"You are surprised, Fraülein, are you not, to see that in our house?"

"Not at all," said Hannele, embarrassed.

"And everything," remarked Waczlaw's wife in her turn, "comes to us from our reverend son; may the Almighty protect him! Our Honza is from heaven; that is why the Almighty loves him so."

Hannele returned home. Honza, that good and excellent son, stood before her eyes, radiant like an angel from the sky.

In a single breath Hannele now undertook a thing which for her, destroyed at once her Maker, her faith, and her future. She had fallen beneath

the power of an evil genius whom there was no resisting.

First of all she took the prayer-book, still open on the table, and full of marks; and threw it on the floor. After that she hastily opened a cupboard and snatched some garments out of it; from another she took linen. She put together in haste a host of other things of less importance. The noise made by the doors turning on their hinges, and the death-like silence which reigned around, terrified her. She was about to go out when it occurred to her that she had no money. Once more she took the bunch of keys and now opened her father's desk. Brilliant coins presented themselves to her eyes. She took them without fear. She would put them in one of her pockets, but it was full. Then she fumbled hurriedly in the drawers for something in which to put the money. In her search she felt her hand on one of the little bags full of earth from Jerusalem, which had been shut up there two years already. She did not hesitate long; and in the twinkling of an eye the twine which fastened the bag was broken, and its precious contents spilt on the floor. She crammed the money into the empty bag. It was now only that she felt horrified at what she had done; she left the cupboard and doors wide open and fled from the house.

Waczlaw's wife was standing in the doorway

of her house. Hannele, out of breath, crossed the road and ran up to her.

"Watch the house, Waczlaw," she said, "and when our people return, and if they ask for me, tell them I have gone to your Honza, and that I shall never come back."

Without saying another word she returned running to the inn. There she took her parcel and put it under her arm; then going out by the yard, got into the fields.

Waczlaw's wife, in amazement, looked at her as she went away.

XV.—Conclusion.

When at night our people came back, exhausted and hungry, to the village, the Randar, who walked in advance of the others, was astonished to see that there was no light in the principal dwelling room.

"She is doubtless in the kitchen preparing the meal," observed a servant.

At heart Rebb Schmull approved the precaution taken by Hannele, who had probably not wished to leave the light *alone* in the chamber. Chatting, asking one another questions more or less pleasant, and inquiring who among them had best supported the fast, and most easily climbed *the mountain of the Iom Kippour,* they reached the house.

To-day, as after each fast day, the Randar did not forget to advise every one to be moderate in taking nourishment once more; otherwise the *Iom Kippour*, instead of being a benefit for the soul, would become a scourge for the stomach. Moritz, in his character of doctor, could not but confirm these wise words.

All approved loudly his counsel, and promised to follow it; in their innermost hearts Rebb Schmull met with some resistance.

Waczlaw's aged wife, enveloped in the shade of night, was still standing at her door watching therefrom the Randar's abode. She was the phantom who had only to pronounce some magic words to change the whole house into a place of desolation and misery. As our people passed her they gave her the evening salutation. Waczlaw's wife went softly towards them.

The corridor was also unlighted; in the kitchen there was no fire. And nevertheless the Randar had not the least suspicion.

"Ought she not to know," he said to himself, "that it is now permitted to light a fire? I would bet that she is asleep from hunger."

In the midst of the darkness they groped their way into the various immense rooms of the house. In vain did they call Hannele from time to time; not a human sound was audible, not a footstep could be heard. A mute terror which made them

expect extraordinary things took possession of all.

"*Schmah Isroel*," cried the Randar, "can some misfortune have happened to the child?"

A servant had gone into the kitchen to get a light. He returned with one. Then they saw a sad spectacle. Cupboards and desk all wide open, on the ground garments scattered about and forgotten. Everything in disorder, and the prayer-book in the midst.

"From all this," said the servant naïvely, "would it not seem—Heaven protect us—that there has been burglary and theft here?"

"Who said that?" cried the Randar, seizing the servant roughly by the arm.

Meanwhile he had himself looked round, and remarked the confusion. Money had been taken from the desk, and the little drawers had been opened.

"Robbers must have been here," he said in an undertone, as though he feared to see his suspicion confirmed.

Now Hannele was called again, and more loudly than ever. Aided by the light, they sought her all over the vast house; each corner was poked into, each trace followed up. No one had yet found the true one.

In the meantime Rebb Schmull hadexamined his desk more narrowly. He did not find in the

disappearance of money abstracted from little wooden drawers, and amounting to some florins merely, sufficient proof of a burglary. He next opened some of the other drawers, which contained much more money and precious things; nothing was missing. He further examined the shelf where had long lain the earth from Jerusalem. Suddenly he was heard to exclaim—

"The earth, the earth has disappeared; it is no robber who has taken that!"

Hearing these cries, Waczlaw's wife came still nearer; she now stood at the threshold of the room.

"Ah!" cried a servant, "she ought to know where Hannele is."

And he drew the peasant woman to the centre of the room.

Waczlaw's wife acquitted herself in the simplest terms of the commission she had undertaken.

"Malediction!" exclaimed the Randar; "she has gone to be *schmadder*." *

The life of Hannele now appeared to the eyes of every one like some country, if one may say so, suddenly lighted by torches. Moritz especially saw it at this moment represented with all its outlines. Still, trembling at what he had just heard, he said—

"Impossible; Hannele cannot have forgotten herself to that point."

* Baptized.

"The earth! the earth!" cried the unhappy father; "it was to spite me that she spilt it. I shall not survive this blow."

For some time the violent grief he felt did not allow him to speak. He wrung his hands; his body was petrified.

As in circumstances of this nature the soul does not easily distinguish what is agitating it and often occupies itself only with the most insignificant portion of its misery, so Rebb Schmull uttered but one cry—

"The earth! the earth!"

He could not even weep.

"And all this just on the holy day of the *Iom Kippour!*" murmured Mendel Wilna.

Moritz, who had not lost his presence of mind, thought Hannele could not yet have taken such a step, the law requiring the father's consent in such cases; for Hannele had not attained her majority.

This remark did not escape the Randar, and he promptly made up his mind.

"Give me my stick," he said, in an almost calm tone. "I will look for her myself."

And already he was buttoning his overcoat, and holding out his hand for the stick which Moritz had not yet given him.

"Let me go," said Moritz. "I will bring her back."

The Randar pushed him away with a furious air.

"My stick!" he cried. "She shall not go out of my hands alive. I mean to kill her, the wretch. She will bring me to the grave."

Moritz, who foresaw what a horrible scene would take place if his father went to seek the fugitive alone, had to resort to superhuman efforts in order to appease him. Mendel Wilna and the servant entreated him and held him back until, as a result of all these efforts, he gave way.

"I will accompany you," said Mendel to Moritz.

The servant went to the stable to harness the horses. This was the affair of an instant.

It was a dark night. The horses could not in consequence go quickly. The servant lost the way more than once. The moon and stars gave but a doubtful light. To all of them the journey seemed eternal.

No one said a word. The night was far advanced when the vehicle entered the village. All Moritz's arteries were beating. He was as moved as if he had committed some misdeed. His whole infancy reappeared in his mind. He had, he thought, drunk deeper in the cup of science, and nevertheless Hannele had been the first to abandon the path of her ancient faith. He forgot that it was precisely through ignorance that the girl

had taken such a step. These thoughts almost discouraged him; he did not know how he ought to act towards his sister, so profound was the abyss which a single day had dug between him and his nearest relative.

They stopped at the inn. Moritz there left the servant with the horses; for, however legitimate his mission, he had the good sense not to go with the vehicle to the rectorial house. He and Mendel went through the village on foot—the church as well as the rector's dwelling lying at the other extremity of the hamlet. Lights could still be seen in it.

Arrived there Moritz paused in hesitation. The whole weight of his mission was about to rest at once upon him. If, when near his object, doubt and discouragement took possession of him!

"Well, shall we go in or not?" asked Mendel, as Moritz was deliberating. "But I must say this, that, but for her father, she ought to be left here. That would be the best thing to do; for what would be gained by our having her? She will never be a good Jewess. The person who has once quitted a Jewish house will never come back again. Whoever does not wish to remain, a Jew ought to go; the Almighty has nothing to do with such deserters."

"You have given one of those counsels," said

Moritz, with ill-humour, "which resemble that relative to the rebuilding of Jerusalem."

He struck the door violently with both hands: the house shook from the blows. At first nothing stirred; then a light was seen in the corridor, and the housekeeper pushed back the bolt. At finding herself in face of the two men she was not in the least frightened; she seemed prepared for their arrival.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"I want to speak to the rector."

"His reverence has already retired to rest," said the housekeeper, hesitating; "call again to-morrow."

"No," said Moritz, "I must speak to him now."

The housekeeper was alarmed by his terrible look. She uttered a wild cry; then a door opened, and the priest, in clerical undress, appeared in person. He had not been to sleep yet, that was easy to see.

For some moments they remained, in presence of one another, without speaking a word. Then the priest, in an almost inaudible voice, said—

"I know the motive of your visit."

"I have come about my sister."

The rector begged them to enter. Hannele was not there.

"She will never return," he then said, his brow contracted, "she has told me so in confidence."

"In that case I wish to speak to her myself."

"She has declared to me, and without the slightest restriction, her desire to become a Christian—and to that nobody in the world can make the least objection."

"Singular and ridiculous pretension!" cried Moritz, who was trembling all over, "to wish to snatch away a soul as one might try to pull up a tree which is still fastened by all its roots to the earth. This young woman is not yet of age."

"Do you think, then," added the mendicant in his jargon, "that one can change his religion as he does his shirt?"

"Such is her freely expressed will."

"She has no will," said Moritz firmly, "and my father will not permit it. I refer you to the law on the subject."

"She will never return," said the priest. "Moreover, it seems to me strange that *you* should claim her. You ought to know that she is about to embrace a pure and beautiful faith. And as she desires it with all her heart, of her own free-will, her determination is rather enviable than otherwise. You, also, my friend, have changed."

"Not in my religion. But do not remind me of our past friendship. My sister must return."

At these words Honza's anger, long restrained, broke out—

"Though you all came to claim her," he said, with violence, "I would not give her up."

Meanwhile the housekeeper had appeared, and now whispered in the rector's ear a few words which neither Moritz nor Mendel could understand. The priest seemed thunderstruck, and wanted to rush out of the room. Arrived near the door he knocked against Hannele.

"Is it true, young woman," he asked, as he tried to take her hand, "that you wish to go back home?"

Hannele snatched herself away, and now stood between the priest and Moritz.

As he looked at her Moritz felt all his anger and rancour extinguished within him. Weeping aloud he threw himself upon her—

"Hannele," he said, "do you wish to break father's heart? Has he not always loved you more than me? What will become of him if his favourite daughter treats him thus?"

The priest bit his lips; Mendel's face was deluged with tears. He, too, sought to draw her away.

"When one day the dead are raised then all who have lived together will meet. Parents will rejoice with their children. But you, Hannele, where will you be then? Where will your bones rest? Who will care to acknowledge you?

Assuredly, neither your father nor your mother. Whom will you go to join then?"

After these words there was a deep silence in the room. But already Hannele had made up her mind.

"Useless to speak another word—I shall go back," she said. "My father may do to me what he likes."

"Go!" said the priest, bitterly; "you have ever been false like all the others," and he went into another room, of which he shut the door violently after him.

When they got outside the house the housekeeper threw to them from the window the parcel of clothes which Hannele had brought with her.

"Go!" she cried to her, in a venomous tone; "go, accursed Jewess that you are!"

So Moritz returned with the soul which he had just saved. The young woman remained on her knees weeping. The servant drove the horses at full speed—they flew along almost as quickly as Moritz's thoughts. At midnight they got home.

The Randar beholding his daughter once more did not say a word; he confined himself to gazing fixedly at her, and then moved away. This silence terrified Moritz. It seemed to him to portend evil. He would have preferred a storm and re-

proaches. He scarcely knew what to think of the change.

Events confirmed his fears. Hannele's flight had shaken to its very foundations the robust life of the Randar. The next morning he could not rise; and when Mendel Wilna wished to set off again on his road, he begged him to remain till after his death. In spite of all that was said to him he felt convinced that he would never get up again. The long *Kippour* fast and the grief which followed it had eaten away his vitality like devouring worms. He lay continually on the side of the bed nearest the wall; spoke seldom, and from time to time was heard to murmur these words, which were engraved on his soul—"The earth! the earth!"

The *Holemoed* had arrived; but no suitor for the hand of Hannele made his appearance. On the other hand there was a corpse in the house. The Randar had died the second day of the feast of leaves. As he left the house, Mendel Wilna, who bade adieu to it for ever, remarked—

"After all I have seen and heard it seems to me more than ever that Jerusalem ought to be rebuilt. Not till now have I really wished to give myself up to the work!"

Moritz practises as a doctor in a quiet ghetto of Bohemia. He gives his care to sick bodies and

souls. His sister is a living proof of this. She will never become a wife; for no one, we suspect, will come forward courageous enough to pay court to one who has strayed so far on a strange path.

WITHOUT AUTHORISATION.

WITHOUT AUTHORISATION.

It is long since the street presented so fine an aspect as to-day. It is *Holemoed*. Like a young man full of gaiety who in his happiness scarcely knows how to begin his day, the *Holemoed* comes and goes in the ghetto; it laughs, jokes, and performs a thousand pranks. We must inform those of our readers to whose ears the language of revelation sounds rather like the Hottentot, that the *Holemoed* is the joyous time of the minor feasts which take place twice a year at Easter and at Tabernacles. These two feasts, as is well known, are from their nature pretty long, for each lasts eight days. But the wise Legislator who knew very well that man grows tired of joy as of sadness inserted in both feasts the *Holemoed*. The days of the *Holemoed* are like all other days; one can attend to his business as usual and the synagogue does not take up most of the morning; a thousand other things easier to feel than to see indicate that to-day is not a *Iontef*.* And in spite of that the *Iontef* transpires on every side. It is as though people had been forbidden to speak of it, and to compensate themselves repre-

* Greater feast.

sented it by their garments, their figures and their bearing. All is enveloped in a peculiar festal atmosphere; nowhere can be heard the piercing business cry, and it is only to avoid losing the habit that people go their daily rounds. There is not the ordinary spirit of activity. It can be plainly seen that the back which bends under balls of cotton or material for waistcoats would rather lie on the soft cushion of the Sabbath armchair, and that those who are inspecting a sack of wool or looking at pieces of silk as they are unrolled would prefer to be amid the savour of *Iontef* dishes.

The *Holemoed*, in short, is the intermediary element between the silent lips of the Sabbath and the noisy gesticulations of the work day. Hence its particular character.

May we not add that on this day Nature herself observes the *Holemoed?* Do not the birds sing louder than usual? Does not the sun shine in a more joyous manner? It throws its rays like so many golden threads on the narrow and pointed gable ends of the ghetto. Above the houses daylight, below twilight. But there where the street widens the golden threads disperse themselves, falling unobstructed to the earth; and the faces of those who happen to walk under these threads become covered with the sun's rays and as if gilded.

Here is precisely one of these faces gilded by the sun which presents itself to me. I know you

and salute you, *Jaekev Lederer*, and I should be inclined to cry *Salem alechem* if I were not aware that peace already reigns at the bottom of your heart. The whole week he has dragged himself to all the fairs exclaiming with his bad Bohemian accent, *Laezini, laezini.** He has held the measure in his hand, and nevertheless he has probably sold nothing! But to-day he has remained at home, and certainly the *Holemoed* does not count a heart more faithful and filled with a deeper veneration for it than that of Jaekev, whose existence is so restless.

As he goes along there, his hands carelessly joined behind his back, humming a *Iontef* tune which yesterday, for the first time, the chanter intoned in the synagogue, the Sabbath hat, admirably brushed, on his head, wearing his rather threadbare old overcoat which has so long accompanied him on his rounds through the neighbouring villages, and on which nevertheless his cravat sheds, as it were, the soft poetry of the feast day with that smiling face, smooth and calm, is not *Jaekev Lederer* the *Holemoed* living and in person?

In truth, when that little woman, who there near the large flight of steps retails mouldy cheese and dried citron peel, addresses our man in these terms—

"Are you not going to the village to-day,

* Cheap.

Jaekev?" we know beforehand the answer he will give her.

"What an idea, Aunt Gitel!" he says. "Go to the village to-day! Must I never leave the peasant in peace, or shall it be said that the rich Schmull Brandeis can alone remain at home with his wife and children and regale himself with cakes, while I, Jaekev Lederer, have to go everywhere with my pack of merchandise because Heaven has given him a few more pence than me? It is *Holemoed* to-day, and no one shall make me quit the *kille*."*

Thereupon he walks away again humming his *Iontef* air which is drowned in the joyous sounds of the ghetto.

Here, too, we see before us living signs, as it were, of the lesser *fête*. House-wives dressed out are standing in the shops or sitting grouped together chattering and laughing. Business to-day is banished to the second place; but see those bonnets adorned with many-coloured ribbons, those gold chains hanging round their necks, and those pearl necklaces! Why should we not see with pleasure the pleasure of these poor women rejoicing at their *Holemoed* which allows them to display such finery to the public gaze?

Across the ghetto run noisy bands of urchins; to-day they have a dispensation from swallowing

* Community.

the dust of school. Three of these screamers surround their mother and ask her for money. One of them leaps on his mother's neck and covers her with caresses; the second touches her lightly on the hand, while the third and smallest pulls her maliciously by the apron, which holds some clinking coins. The mother long resists, but in the end gives in.

"And what are you going to do with it?" she asks them.

"To-day is *Holemoed*," reply the voices of the screamers in chorus, and they escape with their money.

It would be necessary to be able to sound the depth of a mother's heart in order to understand the smile with which, after casting a lingering look on the three fugitives, the woman turned round to one of her richly clad neighbours, saying—

"There, Frau Foegele, now you see what it is to have children."

And why do the eyes of the richly clad woman shine at these words with a bitter lustre. Was she offended? Well, you must know that she had no children of her own.

There near the old wall of the synagogue where stand three nut trees which for the whole year supply the *schamess** with such good nuts, there is assembled a troop of young boys. They are

* Beadle.

playing at the game of "head or eagle," that is to say they are throwing against the wall a piece of money; and they gain or lose according as they have bet on the head or the Emperor's coat of arms. That boy with red hair and a face covered with freckles, casts from his eyes rays of malicious joy; he is pocketing the money of most of his companions.

Sparkling tears roll down the cheeks of that other whose features are so charming and so soft. He has lost all his mother gave him for the *Hole-moed.*

But suddenly the scene changes; at the end of the street a carriage has just appeared, on the box of which sits a postillion, dressed in red, gaily. cracking his whip. A few moments later can be seen a young man, who gets out of the carriage and directs his steps straight to the ghetto. At the sight of him a whisper of admiration runs through the shops and the ranks of the highly dressed house-wives. Heads of curious young women appear at the windows, the boys themselves, for some seconds at least, make a truce in their noise.

The young man, dressed "like a prince," with glittering rings on his ten fingers, which shed on all sides a magic light, a satin cravat, elegantly tied round his neck, has stopped at a shop, and asked which is Rebb Schmull Brandeis's house.

At this question a boy precipitately left the society of his companions and ran at full speed towards Rebb Schmull Brandeis's house. What a chance! he will be the first to give news there of the arrival of the carriage. He is sure to get a good recompense.

"The bomb is truly going to explode there to-day," says the richly clad mother of three screamers; "all through the year I have seen the *schadschan** going to the place."

"It is high time," replies the other with an ironical smile; "she has been long enough with her ten thousand florins making suitors press for her hand. Already the most eligible men have been proposed to her; she will end perhaps by hooking one on."

"Is it true that she gets ten thousand florins?"

"Ten thousand florins down and a stock of clothes as good as any princess."

The women have guessed aright. The young man with the satin cravat and sparkling rings has in fact come to have a matrimonial interview with Rebb Schmull Brandeis's daughter.

But now the young man and Rebb Schmull Brandeis's daughter, with her ten thousand florins, as well as the matrimonial interview fade away before another incident. From the Rabbi's house

* Matrimonial agent.

at this moment is issuing a troop of newly engaged couples. They are going to submit to a painful ordeal, for they have to go the bailiff's to endure an examination in the "Children of Zion."* And if some of these herculean types whom from their rustic pronunciation we shall know to be young men and maids from the village, are for the moment a prey to fear, they must be pardoned. This is perhaps the first time they have quitted their silent country home; and now they have in presence of the Rabbi to render account of what they know or do not know of the religion of their fathers. Some of the other young women look prouder and more confident. To them the examination is nothing; they have their "Children of Zion" at their finger ends, and they laugh at the villagers' fears. The instructor had not for six months to labour in order to get "morality" into their heads. Moreover, they will reply in good German, and they rejoice beforehand to hear the absurd answers given by the men and maids of the village. Happy maids of the ghetto who have been trained to speak good German!

The smiling *Holemoed* figure of Jaekev Lederer

* According to the laws now in force, a couple of lovers, before they can think of an official demand for an authorisation of marriage, must undergo before the chief Rabbi, the head of the community, an examination in the book of moral and religious instruction called the "Children of Zion." This book of which the forms have grown a little antiquated is being replaced by another more in accord with modern times, whose author is Dr. Wessely of Prague.

had traversed all the various scenes like so many moving pictures. He had stopped nowhere; his *Iontef* air had not ceased to resound from his lips and had dominated the divers sounds of the ghetto. Not until he passed near some pairs of lovers going to be examined did he become silent. He followed them with his eyes till they disappeared behind the corner of the criminal prison. Now he found himself close to the young boys at play by the side of the synagogue; a violent quarrel had just broken out amongst them.

The red-haired boy covered with freckles had cheated. Perceiving that the piece of money did not turn up to his advantage he had by a quick movement of his foot reversed it and made it favourable to himself. All the others cried out "cheat" and "thief." The boy who seemed most inconsolable was the one with such soft and charming features; for he it was who had just been playing with the red-haired boy. The latter, however, would not give in so readily; he persisted in his assertion.

All the others, like so many ardent champions of right and truth, precipitated themselves upon him; and soon the red-haired boy found himself imprisoned, as it were, by the fists of the young avengers.

"Take care!" he cried, grinding his teeth, to the child so full of gentleness, "take care, bastard;

for you are one—your father married without a *rischojin.*"*

The child began to weep aloud. Jaekev Lederer approached. He had heard the insult inflicted by the red-haired boy upon the child with such a gentle character. At one bound he leaped into the circle, took the weeping child by the arm and led him away without saying a word.

To see him going along the ghetto, holding by the hand the child, who was his own, you would not have recognised the Jaekev Lederer of just now. The *Iontef* air had expired on his lips where at present resided bitter grief extending seemingly to his eyes, which were humid and brilliant the while. The laughing figure of the *Holemoed* had vanished.

The sudden change in our friend Jaekev Lederer had a good cause. We ought to have stated this cause long ago, but was it possible? How could we say such a thing in face of the joyous, happy *Holemoed?*

This Jaekev Lederer had indeed married without authorisation; and as the red-haired boy in his anger had just turned over some retrospective pages of the life and acts of Jaekev Lederer, we shall try not to let them escape us, and shall only continue on our path when we have read them.

* Authorisation to marry granted by the imperial government at Prague.

By a singular chance of destiny Jaekev Lederer found that he had a truly astonishing relation to one of his ancestors of the same name, the patriarch Jacob that is to say. If the delightful romantic episode of Jacob's love for Rachel were not found recorded as authentic in such and such a chapter of the first book of the Pentateuch, one would be inclined to believe that the whole thing was but an allegory referring to the future fortune of our Jaekev Lederer.

Do not, however, expect much romance; for we are in the ghetto, and here people have something else to do than to loiter near the springs in order to help beautiful Rachels to roll heavy stones from the mouths of wells! In the ghetto, men and women are themselves stones, and they have themselves to submit to being pushed and rolled. We shall have to set forth many other differences between the two men. That is not our fault. But one thing was common to both; they each had their Laban. We shall very soon make the acquaintance of Jaekev's.

Like his ancestor the patriarch, our Jaekev had the misfortune to be a younger son; indeed, of his father's four sons he was the last born. What joy for the Jewish mothers who formerly had the good luck to nourish their children in the land of Canaan, and how they praised the Lord when it had been given to them to feed with

strength a large number of sons! They would hardly have believed us had we told them the grief of our mothers of to-day, who sigh much more after girls than for boys.

"What is my son to do in order to have a 'right of family?'"*

Such is the question one often hears them ask. Our Jaekev's mother, during the eight days which followed the birth of her son, had made a similar inquiry without having been able to reply to it.

His father, Rebb David Lederer, was in truth a *familiant,* but our Jaekev could profit nothing by that. For according to law his eldest brother Reuben would inherit the "family right." Jaekev was truly to be envied; he had a "family" before he was able to understand the meaning of the word. His second brother Nathan could still be regarded as fortunate; he was a man of learning, and had taken his doctor's degree, being thus free to marry without waiting for a "family right." Anschel, his third brother, as an honest tailor, enjoyed the same advantage as the doctor. Not possessing a

* The number of Jews enjoying the right of residence in Bohemia has many years been limited to some thousand families. But with the growth of the population this proportion has become insufficient. The possessors of these *family* rights, which are moreover hereditary, enjoy all kinds of advantages. It must be added that these rights can be bought; or they can be conferred by the lords of the manor or the municipalities. Often half a dowry is spent in purchasing this "right of family." Only the learned graduate and the licensed workman are free from this restriction. Written in 1848, these restrictions have since been removed.—TRANSLATOR.

family right, he, too, had been able to create one. Jaekev, alone, who was neither first-born, nor a doctor, nor a workman, could not by the state laws be the head of a family.

Curious to say, a person is born and continues to live, although he positively knows himself to be a State criminal. And such, it cannot be denied, was our Jaekev. It is true that it was no longer possible to procure for him the privilege of a first-born, which Rebecca had been unable to confer on her second son. But why did not he also become a doctor or a tailor? Why thus let slip the occasion and means of obtaining a family right? But as, merely perhaps by way of change, he had chosen the trade of hawker, what was he to do? Then, as beforehand, all claim to possess a "family right" had been taken from him, and as nevertheless, according to all human probability, he would desire to be head of a family, was he not, from the moment of his entry into the world, what may be called a State criminal?

Jaekev had reached an age at which—it was in the order of nature—he was firmly resolved to realize this design. He had cast his eyes on a pretty girl named Resel; she was the daughter of a poor hawker like himself. This choice did our Jaekev the greatest honour; his Resel was a graceful flower of the ghetto. As a match, however, she was none of the best;

her dowry consisted merely of some hundreds of florins. When at the signing of the contract, just as the cup was about to be broken in sign of the betrothal of Jaekev and Resel, he was asked—

"But what will you do about a family right? Are you not a fourth son?" then Jaekev replied—

"First of all I wish to be a *hosen;* * as for the family right, the Almighty will provide that."

Are there not many persons who reach an advanced age, and of whom some even die, without getting a definite meaning of the word "State?" Our Jaekev must not be ranged with these. Too soon, unfortunately for him, he became acquainted with this enigmatical being from which no one can entirely escape, because it is before, behind and at the side of everybody—like a certain pigtail of celebrated memory.

Three years had passed since his betrothal, and still Jaekev was without his family right. Yet during this interval a large number of *familiants* had died; but the second and third sons of rich *balbatim* † had always got the better of him. There had not been a single vacancy for Jaekev. Meanwhile Resel had become a very pretty rose.

It was that perhaps which urged Jaekev to move heaven and earth in order to obtain his *reschojin* or permission to marry. Why did the State stand between them? Jaekev had at length

* A betrothed person. † Fathers of families.

ceased to count on a family right; it always escaped him. Then he wished to try whether things could not go on without a family right. So he collected all the different things necessary to obtain an authorisation to marry; and as the least and most insignificant of these may nevertheless excite our curiosity, we will now look into the little packet, tolerably big, of *attestations, certificates,* and *evidences* of all kinds which had to be written on sheets of paper bearing expensive stamps.

First there was the *conscription* sheet on which witness was borne to the fact that Jaekev Lederer had been liberated from military service. He had passed the assembly of revision, and they had found him weak in the chest; so in this respect he was in order.

Then came the evidence of *non-relationship;* an indispensable document affirming that between Jaekev and his betrothed there existed no degree of affinity contrary to law.

After this the testimony concerning the book of the "Children of Zion," about which we have already spoken.

Then his *certificate of birth,* taken from the book at the Synagogue.

Then a certificate of *circumcision.*

Then a certificate of *good life and manners,* attesting that he was a moral man. As regards this point,

in truth they could have been quite at rest. During the whole year Jaekev did nothing wrong; he never got drunk, never made a disturbance at night. Who, indeed, we ask; who behaves badly in the ghetto?

Then at length came the certificate of *religion*, as the necessary complement of the certificate of birth and the other testimony, showing that eight days after his birth Jaekev had been received into religion according to the Jewish rite.

Finally the certificate of his father's *death*.

With such a number of certificates, documents, and attestations, it would seem that Jaekev ought to have obtained enough authorisations to marry. But he did not obtain one! The most important thing of all was wanting in the big packet, namely, the necessary extract from the Jewish family book; Jaekev, alas, was not a "familiant!"

The documents were sent in; six months elapsed during which Jaekev presumed that the authorities had long since impressed the *reschojin* with their official seal. But one Sabbath an agent from the municipal police brought him back the entire packet, together with yet another document, of which the contents may be summed up thus: that Jacob Lederer, Jewish merchant, living at No. 15, must know that without the extract from the Jewish family book, and unless therein authorised in the terms of the law (paragraph after para-

graph cited here), it was useless for a person to put forth claims for an authorisation to marry, and that consequently Jacob Lederer, as ignorant of the laws, and as having neglected to conform thereto, was once for all refused his demand.

A municipal councillor had signed his name on the document; an evident proof that the big packet of attestations had lain at the Mayor's office during the whole six months without going elsewhere.

By this document Jaekev Lederer and his Resel saw their future cut off, as it were, by a knife. Three more years passed and still they had not recovered from this first check. There was only one thing which the official document had not mentioned; that they must cease to belong to one another, to love and to hope, although that was implied.

Is there not something touching in this couple of long since betrothed lovers? In such a case love never shows itself unless with shame; it squeezes hands in secret, and only blushes when unobserved.

People took pleasure in laughing at this couple of ancient lovers. On the Sabbath Jaekev and Resel walked together in solitude; for they could no more be ranged with the young people than with the married couples. And then it was maliciously asked why the two were allowed to go out thus alone? Was it not rather dangerous?

Jaekev had once more sent in his demand; but this time he had only a month to wait for a reply. The reply was couched in much less gentle terms than before. Among other civilities Jaekev was told that he ought to have taken the first answer as a sufficient warning, and he was no more to importune the administration, &c.

It was the fourth year of their engagement. Jaekev with his thirty-six years had become an old bachelor. Resel was only three years younger. Jaekev took the official reply to his betrothed at her house; they read it together, and the old bachelor and the old maid wept like children, or somewhat after the manner of Jacob and Rachel when Laban had similarly opposed their suit. At length Jaekev's patience which had lasted fourteen whole years turned into silent rage. One day he said to his Resel—

"I can see that as for the *reschojin* we must not think of it, the authorities refuse. But I don't want to wait any longer. Resel, are you willing to get married?"

Resel remained silent, and what is more did not even blush at this tender inquiry. Had she not during all this time become a little familiar with the sound and meaning of the word *chasene*.*

"Well, are you willing?" he asked for the second time.

* Marriage.

"Yes," she replied in a low voice.

"All right," said Jaekev, "in fifteen days we will get married, although without a *reschojin*."

After waiting fourteen years, could they indeed do anything else? The parents of the couple of old lovers had nothing to say against the authorisation which the latter had granted to themselves.

The marriage was fixed to take place at *Lag Beomer*.*

The marriage took place, not in the town, but in a village, because it was necessary to avoid publicity. Just as many persons were invited as were necessary to form a *minian*.† All was done in the quietest possible way. The *houpé* or nuptial dais, under which the couple were to receive the benediction, was not erected in the open air, but in an underground room; and as the chief Rabbi in his quality of official personage could not unite them, a poor Rabbi pronounced the benediction on the old bachelor and his betrothed.

During the superb nuptial repast which followed the young woman showed herself particularly sad.

* The seven weeks intervening between Easter and Whitsuntide, bear a certain resemblance to the "Lent" which follows Ash Wednesday. During this interval all pleasures are set aside, because the influence is feared of evil spirits which at this time makes itself felt. The thirty-third day is an exception. On that day marriages are celebrated, and other amusements indulged in; it is called *Lag Beomer*, or the scholars' feast.

† Assembly of ten men.

Under the bonnet embroidered in gold, which she wore as an indication that henceforth she was not one of the unmarried women, and of which the fringe fell over her eyes—beneath this bonnet trickled hot tears. The poor woman regretted having got married so secretly, and without any one knowing it, as though, during her former life, she had, Heaven forbid, committed some fault.

"Cheer up, Resel," said Jaekev, who had retained all his gaiety, "I love you just the same, although we have no *reschojin*."

The next day Jaekev was beaming all over. A *reschojin* was no longer needed in order that his happiness might be at its height.

We have already said that the *Iontef* air had expired on his lips, where now resided bitter grief, which seemed to extend even to his eyes. The smiling figure of the *Holemoed* had vanished.

Do you now understand why Jaekev Lederer had so long followed with his eyes the young men and maids going to be examined in the "Children of Zion?" Why, too, he seized his child by the hand and led him away? Do you perceive moreover the cause of his sudden departure?

Men often vex themselves out of measure about altogether insignificant things, which on cool examination they see to be quite ridiculous. At heart then Lederer ought not to have taken offence at the insult of the little red-haired boy; for his

child was the son of virtuous parents, although they had been married without a *reschojin*.

Had he, though, a dark foreboding that the insult he had just heard, was but the prelude to a far greater misfortune?

At noon, as Jaekev Lederer was at table with his wife and child, a knock was heard at the door, and on the words "Come in," the agent of the municipal police, a paper in hand, entered the silent dwelling. Who does not from experience know the terror which the *executive power* sheds around itself? Jaekev Lederer and his wife turned pale as death.

The police agent who had just entered was for the rest an old acquaintance of Jaekev's. He it was who had always brought the replies and the refusals of the municipality, and painful as had been the contents of these documents, he had never gone away empty-handed. So the agent on entering, made a familiar salutation, and in acquitting himself of his mission did not behave in the surly manner usual with police officers, who generally show their claws ten paces off.

"Jaekev Lederer," said the police agent as he handed him a notification, "you are required to appear on Tuesday morning, as the clock strikes nine, at the Town Hall. You are cited before the burgomaster."

"Who?" asked Jaekev, with that smiling

innocence which fear begets. "What does the burgomaster want me for?"

The police officer apologized for being unable to reply to this question, and meanwhile sat down with dignity at the table as though he meant thereby, "I have only to use my will to deprive you of all this." Resel understood this mute language of the executive power, and at once cut off a large piece of *Iontef* cake, and placed it before him as a just tribute.

So long as the police agent sat there eating, Jaekev endeavoured to keep countenance; but hardly had he left when he threw far from him his knife and fork, and with both hands covered his face.

"Misery!" cried Resel. "Jaekev, what crime have you committed? Have you bought some stolen article?"

In any other circumstance, such a question even from his wife, would have irritated Jaekev in the highest degree. But now all his thoughts and sentiments were buried in grief.

"*Schmah Isroel!*" he cried, "have you forgotten that we were married without a *reschojin?* It is that, I will bet my head! What sin then have I committed?"

It is a characteristic peculiar to good men, that they attribute all their misfortunes to themselves. For the rest this *fatum* of sin exercises in the

ghetto its gloomy power. The fault lies perhaps with the prophets of the Old Testament; who threw the least with the greatest sins into one common urn until this urn overflowed. The contents, however, of the vessel have remained in the ghetto. And yet we often so little deserve our misfortunes. What sin for example, had Jaekev Lelerer committed to bring about the accession of a new king of Egypt —that is to say of a new burgomaster?

And the new burgomaster, impatient to distinguish himself, wished for that reason to lay his hand on Jaekev Lederer's shoulder. Even to this day, when the State and the ghetto are constantly in relations with one another, there exist so many laws and ordinances which are not proclaimed, but dormant, and which hang like invisible swords over the Jew's head, that the lowest officials can do themselves the pleasure of playing the part of a Haman on a small scale.

In the ghetto then, whenever a new-comer of this kind is installed, all eyes are turned upon him in the greatest uneasiness. What does he bring with him? Is he desirous of making himself remarked? How will he behave to the Jews? for a beginning is always made upon them. It is not till long after, when constant relations have familiarised them with the mildness of the judge's character, that they cease to take such great

precautions; and we have even instances of burgomasters becoming in their turn friends of the ghetto. Let us hope for a conversion of this kind in our new burgomaster.

But for the moment we must not think of it. The new burgomaster intends to be severe; it is only a fortnight since he was invested with his functions. So Jaekev Lederer knows what his marriage without a *reschojin* will cost him!

Mute grief breaking out from time to time in loud laments on the part of Jaekev, and tears on that of Resel, filled the little apartment. The couple saw the iron hand of justice pass to and fro before their eyes; they felt its invisible power without knowing how to avoid it. At length their long regret having produced no result, Jaekev as though inspired with a thought from heaven cried joyfully, "What do you think, Resel, an idea has struck me: let us send to the advocate—he will give us good advice."

Resel consented.

The "advocate," we must hasten to say, was neither a man of study nor of science; he was simply Rebb Lippmann Goldberg, of whom people said by way of eulogy, that "he had a head of iron." This head of iron was not exactly his own work, but had been formed by long experience in judicial affairs. Rebb Lippmann belonged to that class of citizens who throughout the year are "up

to the neck" in law cases. There was never a week in which he had not business to do at the municipal council house, the court, or elsewhere.

For that reason, as well as by a genius for chicanery, he had acquired such a knowledge of legal procedure that he succeeded in most of his cases without resorting to any one else. So the people in the ghetto thought very highly of him, seeing moreover that frequently he had gained riches for them by his quibbles and his tricks; and they profited also by his counsel for suits they themselves conducted. He pointed out to them, for example, the steps to take, and put cunning shifts on their tongue. And if one was a little amiable towards him he undertook to ascertain from the notaries and officials with whom he was in general on the best terms what day such and such a case would be called up, or such and such a petition examined and sent forward.

All this had procured for him, and, in truth, more justly than for many a student, the title of "advocate."

The advocate appeared. He was not tall, and his exterior said nothing particular; but his face sparkled and glittered like knife blades. Directly he entered the couple felt considerably relieved; so true it is that the approach of good advice, even when it has not yet been given, causes tranquillity.

"Well," said the advocate without replying to the *Baruch habo*,* "what has happened? Your face is as sad as rain."

Jaekev began to lament his luck, adding that he feared it was owing to the *reschojin* that the notification had been sent to him.

"Is it here?" asked the advocate, interrupting him.

The notification still lay on the table. Rebb Lippmann took it up and went towards the window to examine it the better. He remained fully a quarter of an hour thus engaged; for with a mania common to clever men who understand the law our advocate thought that under each comma and dot over the letter *i* there must be a hidden meaning like a trap, and that this hidden meaning could only be divined by dint of reflection and mental torture. It will be seen that the advocate was well up in *the law*. After reading it over several times, after weighing each word as in a balance of gold ten times without passing to the next he threw the paper with violence on to the table and cried—

"You have nothing at all to fear; I tell you so myself."

The fact is that the notification said nothing

* "Blessed be he who enters." The new-comer ought to reply on his side, "Blessed be they who are sitting here." *Baruch Joschvim.*

but this, that Jaekev Lederer, Jewish dealer, and the woman Resel must appear on Tuesday morning without fail at nine o'clock precisely, at the Town Hall, No. 5; that in case of failure, &c., &c. It was the jargon habitually employed by the municipal administration.

"Do you think so seriously, Rebb Lippmann?" inquired Resel, observing how confident the advocate was.

"You have nothing at all to fear," he repeated, "Lippmann Goldberg tells you so."

This consolation so imperturbably expressed, had not altogether convinced Jaekev; he murmured—

"But still, Rebb Lippmann, if"—

"Idiot that you are," he replied with a smile of superiority, "idiot that you are! If they had had any designs on your person would they have sent a notification to your house? The polic would at once have come to take you to prison Do you think that the administration would amuse itself with scrawling on paper, and would only want to see you in two days if it really desired to take you by the collar? In any case you have nothing to fear; I know what I am saying."

Thereupon he went towards the door, having thus acquitted himself of his duty as counsellor.

But the advocate's clever explanation on the subject of justice in its apprehending and justice

in its writing character had not in the least tranquillised the married couple.

"But, if, Rebb Lippmann," said Jaekev—"for you know very well that we were married without a *reschojin*—but, if they had designs on our person?"—

"That is not what the notification says," replied the pitiless advocate, who, for the second time and in the manner of sharp men, went by the letter of the law. Already he held the latch on his way out.

"But if," cried Resel with anxiety, running after him and shedding tears copiously, "but if they speak to us of the *reschojin!* For the love of heaven, Rebb Lippmann, what are we to say, what are we to say? Aid us, counsel us!"

The profound distress of the husband and wife seemed to have touched the altogether judicial heart of the advocate; he slowly retraced his steps, placed himself at the head of the table, lowered his eyes, and for some time reflected.

Then, all at once—

"Good! *Positus!* Suppose you are both asked for your *reschojin*, what must you do then? To Jaekev they will say, 'Is it true, Jacob Lederer, that you have taken as your legitimate wife, the aforesaid Resel Mireles, now present?' What will you reply to that question?"

"Yes," said Jaekev.

"No, no," cried the advocate, violently striking the table. "No, a thousand times no. Directly you say that, you will be guilty. Then your turn will come, Resel. You will be interrogated, and they will inquire of you also, 'Is it true, Resel Mireles, that the aforesaid Jacob Lederer, now present, has taken you as his legitimate wife?'"

"No," answered Resel, in tears; she uttered an evident falsehood in order to please the advocate.

"Good," said Rebb Lippmann. "Both of you must say no. Note that well, and do not be mistaken. But then they will say to you, 'Well, Jacob Lederer, since you have not taken for wife the aforesaid Resel Mireles, what is she to you?' for you must know that these municipal gentlemen have good heads. What will you reply to that?"

"She is my wife, my lawful wife," cried Jaekev, forgetting. He would have made no other exclamation before the judge.

Resel sobbed.

"Go on," said the advocate with more calmness than one would have expected from him—Then suddenly speaking in a louder and loftier voice: "So you cannot get into your stupid head that you must not say yes. You are determined to begin by ruining yourself. If they ask you, 'Since the aforesaid Resel

Mireles is not your wife, what is she?' you must answer, 'She is my housekeeper,' and you, Resel, you will say, 'Jacob Lederer supports me.' By this means you will both get out of the difficulty."

"His housekeeper!" said Resel, in a tone of lament; "Jaekev, I have to pass merely for your housekeeper. Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"Get clear in any other way if you can," said the advocate, rising. "I have given you all the advice at my command. I repeat it: Resel must pass for your housekeeper, and they will think she is supported by you. I see no other means."

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Jaekev, "what object has the Emperor in thus tormenting me, my wife, and my child? What have I done to him? He does not even know me, and I do not know him."

"Fine reasoning," cried the advocate irritated, for his whole judicial nature revolted at this naïve exclamation. "Would you have the Emperor of Vienna know who Jaekev Lederer is, and that he has taken a wife without a *reschojin?* The Emperor has his tribunals, and they have their regulations, which the Emperor himself cannot alter. A good joke! The Emperor know of Jaekev Lederer's sorrows! He has other cares in his head; at this moment he is perhaps thinking of making war against England or Russia."

After this short but sufficient discourse on the nature of the "absolute monarchy, limited," the advocate went away without however leaving behind him either tranquillity or consolation. For of what use were his directions, wise as they might be concerning the attitude to be observed before the tribunal, by people who had got married without a *reschojin?*

Resel in particular could not reconcile herself to the idea, that she must pass merely for Jaekev's housekeeper. We shall not inform the reader that she spent two lamentable days in tears; for we shall find it difficult to make him believe that often the night did not, in Resel's eyes, seem dark enough to hide the blushes on her cheeks when she recalled the word *housekeeper* and all that it conveyed.

It is Tuesday morning. Time, nine o'clock precisely. Let us accompany the anxious couple to the Town Hall. In walking straight from the ghetto we shall not pass through the market place, for shame prevents our going by the large gate where the women from their shops could see us. But we shall creep along by the back of the Town Hall where stands the house of correction. Now, with palpitating heart, we ascend the narrow winding flight of steps which more than one person has descended for the last time to the sound of a little bell in indication of a hanging. Let us stop there,

at office No. 5. Let us leave the amiable police to receive Jaekev Lederer and his wife; the door is slammed. We remain outside.

"Jaekev Lederer," says the burgomaster, "you have a child. What is his name?"

"Benjamin, Mr. Burgomaster."

"His age?"

"He will be eight at our Passover."

"Who is his mother?"

"I, Mr. Burgomaster," cried Resel, with a deep sense of her maternity.

At this moment the face of "little Rose" presented a remarkably touching aspect.

The burgomaster at her reply looked fixedly in front of him; he seemed to be thinking of some new questions. In office No. 5 one could almost hear the beating of the mother's heart.

"Jaekev Lederer," then inquired the burgomaster, "do you acknowledge this child to be your son?"

"Am I not his father?"

The burgomaster reflected again.

"And Resel Mireles, what is the nature of your relations with Jaekev Lederer?"

"I do not understand, Mr. Burgomaster."

"I ask you if he furnishes you with enough money for the maintenance and education of your child?"

Resel opened her eyes wide.

"Is he not my?"— she was going to say, but suddenly she reflected, and corrected herself thus: "Is he not his father?"

"What surname does the child bear?"

"Lederer, sir."

"Do you live in Jacob Lederer's house Resel?"

At this moment appeared to Resel's eyes a kind of ocean which threatened to overwhelm her. The palpitation of her heart became more and more audible. In the midst of tears and sobs she cried—

"Am I not his housekeeper?"

The burgomaster raised his eyes; his heart was not so prone to evil that he could not be affected by Resel's exclamation. He suspected the secret of the whole matter; and we must say, to his honour, that he was sorry to have pressed these poor Jews so far—a proof, we record it with joy, that we were not deceived in our presentiments expressed above.

He now went on questioning with much more mildness, and judging simply from the tone of his voice, we may conclude that he was touched. He even inquired, and with interest, about Jaekev's circumstances; then he dismissed them, and when they were near the door once more addressed Jaekev.

"I charge you Jaekev Lederer," he said, "to treat your illegitimate child and your housekeeper,

as well as though they were your legitimate child and your wife."

"Rest assured, Mr. Burgomaster, we fathers of the ghetto never fail to fulfil such duties."

Below, in front of the Town Hall, the advocate awaited to hear the result of the affair. Directly he saw the husband and wife return safe and sound he cried—

"Well, did I deceive you? Had you the least thing to fear?"

Beaming with joy, Jaekev repeated to him the questions that had been asked, and told him how surprised he was that nothing had been said about the *reschojin*.

"Fool that you are," said the advocate, "that only surprises you because you understand nothing of jurisprudence. Under each question he put to you, the *reschojin* lay hidden. A magistrate, if he wishes to arrive at the truth, is obliged to proceed in that fashion. For every person cited before justice, however innocent he may be, has a desire to lie. Consequently the acute magistrate is compelled to question you in such a way that he entraps you without your suspecting it."

Resel walked with the two men in silence, absorbed in her thoughts; she seemed to pay but little attention to the advocate's interpretations. Suddenly she cried—

"Rebb Lippman, what is an *illegitimate child?* That is the expression used by the burgomaster, but I don't know what it means."

"It is a child like any other child," replied the advocate, "with the difference that it has not an avowed father."

"What does that mean?"

"It means that the child was born before *chasene.*"*

"And therefore a bastard?"

"Yes."

"Heavens," cried the unfortunate Resel, raising her hands to the sky. "So my child is a bastard, my child is not legitimate! The burgomaster lied if he said so; my child is as legitimate as any in our street. I am his legitimate mother, and Jaekev his legitimate father. Who will dare contradict this?"

"Foolish woman," said the advocate, "do we not know all that? But the burgomaster must not know it; otherwise would you have declared to him that you are only Jaekev Lederer's housekeeper?"

"Heavens! what have I done," said Resel in a tone of lament. "I have insulted my own child. Now the burgomaster seriously believes that I am only Jaekev's housekeeper, and that my child—Heaven preserve me! is a natural child. What have I done?"

* Marriage.

"There is no way," murmured the advocate "of making women understand reason," and as he had just arrived at his abode, he precipitated himself thereinto, leaving his two companions.

Resel went along the street uttering complaints and cries of grief, which Jaekev could not appease. People looked at her in astonishment. But it was not till she got home that her grief broke out beyond measure; for a long time she was unable to resign herself. It was a very sad *Holemoed*. The word "housekeeper" had deeply afflicted her; but *natural child* broke her very heart.

"Strange woman," said Jaekev to her, "ought we not to lift our hands to Heaven and thank God for having enabled us to escape from the burgomaster's hands? Why do you cry and complain in this way?"

"You speak like that because it was not you that brought the child into the world. You are not concerned that at the Town Hall your child should be treated as a bastard. Is that the name that my angelic boy must bear? Rather than this Jaekev, I will cry from every housetop so that all may know it; the whole world shall know that Resel Lederer is a respectable woman, and that her son is respectable too. I will find means, though I have to go to the Emperor at Vienna."

Who is not acquainted with this singular action of our soul when by a thousand diverse thoughts

as by so many instruments, it tries the full compass of its wings? Without being yet in accord, these thoughts sound pell-mell, this a little more, this a little less loud, until at length, one strong thought, hidden hitherto, begins to increase and grows more and more. Then it has to be given way to; all the other thoughts vanish, and the single great one remains sole mistress.

Thus things went on in the mind of Jaekev Lederer's wife with her idea of *going to see the Emperor.* The idea once conceived that his Majesty could legitimatize her children, it never left her for long. Continually it returned; Resel saw it grow, so to say; saw it take form and consistency.

The Emperor, the Emperor alone could aid her.

It may seem strange to us that this simple woman in the depth of her grief should rush so quickly towards what she considered the highest authority under heaven; the reason is that on solemn occasions the human soul has no notion of the slowness of transitions—then it either despairs or exalts itself. For the rest, at all times the figure of the Emperor hovers high and powerful in the ghetto! The people look upon him as responsible for everything; he can bind and unbind, he represents the law and he is the independent will, he can bring about impossibilities, and overthrow possibilities. Who knows whether he may not confer a "family right" on Jaekev Lederer?

Resel then wanted to go to Vienna. In the middle of the night she awoke her husband to communicate to him the resolution she had formed after ample reflection.

"Jaekev," she said, "I am going to see the Emperor at Vienna, and to beg him to give me a 'family right.'"

"A pleasant journey," replied Jaekev, half asleep; then his head fell back on the pillow.

The next day she approached him with the same words. Jaekev merely laughed; then Resel took offence and began to lament. Jaekev on his side became gradually reconciled to the idea of going for help to a high place, and this was quite natural. He admired the boldness of his wife who had resolved to go, without further ceremony to the Emperor at Vienna; and he admired her so much, that he ended by sharing her courage. After all the journey was not such a long one. Once more the advocate was sent to. He came. He was informed of the determination which had been made. Jaekev had first thought that the advocate would laugh at it and reject the idea; but in this matter he did not at all understand the judicial nature of Lippmann Goldberg. To him who lived on terms of the closest intimacy with the representatives of terrestial justice, who had unrestrained access to the offices of all the notaries

and officials, must not this step towards the Emperor, the greatest of all judges, seem sublime?

"Who would have suspected this in Resel Mireles?" he said, holding his hands clasped and gazing for a long time at that courageous woman. "One would have thought she didn't know that two and two make four, and here she is wanting to go straight to the Emperor! Courage, Resel! But before your departure I will give you some instructions as to how you must speak to the Emperor, for this is a matter which requires attention; it is not as though you were going to address yourself to the *roschz hakohl*,* Schmull Brandeis."

"Excuse me, Rebb Lippmann," replied Resel, who had not yet forgotten the word "housekeeper"; "it is unnecessary to tell me what I ought to say; rest assured, I shall speak as Heaven inspires me."

The advocate smiled; he saw with pleasure the unshakable woman's determination, which he appreciated better than any one. He was requested to draw up a petition to the Emperor for a FAMILY RIGHT, and secrecy in the affair was enjoined upon him. The advocate promised to go at once to a notary of his acquaintance. In the evening nevertheless, it was known throughout the ghetto that Resel Mireles proposed immedi-

*Chief of the community.

ately after the holidays, to go and have an *audience of the Emperor.*

At the time when Resel repaired from the heart of peaceful Bohemia to the noisy town of Vienna, the journey was not made so rapidly as now. One had to pass three days and three nights on the road before seeing the spire of the tower of Saint-Stephen. So at present the Jewish people are perfectly happy, and have nothing more to wish. What more, indeed, can they desire?

If for example a Jew nowadays finds himself somewhere in presence of a burgomaster, and is not altogether satisfied with him, he takes the train in the evening, and very early the next day can have his audience at Vienna. Would it not be ungrateful to expect more?

The first thing that Resel had to do in the great town of pleasures was to visit the *judenamt*,* in view of a passport and a permit of sojourn. It was quite natural; before reaching the Emperor the police had to be passed. In the ante-room attached to the *judenamt* Resel met nearly eighty persons, as many men as women and children of her religion, who were all awaiting the joyful moment when the police soldier guarding the door leading to the Chancellor's office would open it to them. The door at length opened, and the waves of the throng which inundated the sanctu-

* Office for Jewish affairs.

ary now at last accessible, carried Resel with them. They were called upon one after another, and some had to submit to a complete interrogation as to the object and length of their sojourn. Then the severe bureaucrat more than once made objections to their being allowed to breathe the air of Vienna. Others seemed to be in great favour with the same bureaucrat, and these without the least delay received their permit of sojourn. No one, for the rest, could have complained of being ill received; the same consideration and politeness was shown to all. All were equal before the scribe, as should be the case in the eyes of the law he represents.

"Where do you come from?" he asked a female cook, for the moment out of occupation, and standing at the bar of the office.

"From No. 108,"* she replied, lowering her eyes.

The scribe burst out laughing, and could not stop himself.

"I thought so," he replied at intervals during his inextinguishable laughter, which continued until he had made out the permit of sojourn.

At length Resel's turn had come. She approached the bar. The scribe scanned her passport. Resel trembled more than she had done before the burgomaster.

* That is to say from the royal and imperial house for foundlings, situated in the *Alserforstadt*.

"Not married?" he inquired, looking simultaneously at the passport on which Jaekev's legitimate wife was thus described, and at Resel, who turned purple at the question. The fact is that with her cap and her features which were those of a married woman, she looked very little like one living in celibacy.

"No," she replied, with hesitation.

"And when did you last become single?" cried the scribe, emphasizing the final word in particular; and he was seized with laughter still more inextinguishable than that which had taken him when dealing with the cook of No. 108. Resel, deeply annoyed, said nothing; her eyes and cheeks showed that she was profoundly agitated.

"What have you come here to do?" the scribe went on.

"To see the Emperor."

"You?"

"To obtain an audience."

The scribe questioned her no further; he wrote out the permit of sojourn and handed it to Resel. With a solaced heart she quitted the leaden walls of the *judenamt*.

She was nearly three hours wandering through great streets before she succeeded in finding again the inn in the *Pressgass* where she was staying. By a very natural sentiment one is quite familiar

with people in the street of whom one wishes to inquire the way.

But for people who are in haste, the information desired is a veritable contribution in words, a contribution to which all do not like to submit. After many inquiries, Resel at last got into the Seitenstatt street, whence but a few steps would take her to the inn. Passing by the great building of the Jewish *temple*, she met a man who, after long examining the traveller's features, cried suddenly:—"Is it not Resel Mireles, my cousin's daughter?"

Resel, on her side, recognised the man; it was Rebb Simche Wolf, the son of her mother's brother, who had long resided in the great capital of the empire, in whose houses and streets he exercised the trade of hawker.

"Welcome to Vienna," exclaimed cousin Simche, joyfully, after the two relatives had verified one another's identity; "what have you come for?"

Resel communicated to him the object of her journey, and said that she wished to obtain an audience of the Emperor. The hawker did not appear in the least astonished at the affair. Having lived such a long while in the capital the word "Emperor" did not strike him as at all extraordinary. Could he not every day, if he chose, see the Emperor walking on the *Bastei* or in the

Prater? Then Simche asked Resel where she was lodging, and when she said she was at the inn he insisted on her coming to stay at his house, where she would be with relations. Resel joyfully accepted this proposition.

So, with his packets under his arm, and walking beside his cousin, he went out of the town; for the hawkers live outside in Ressau.* His wife and children gave their guest the most friendly reception, although to entertain her they were straitened in their two little rooms. To them also Resel communicated the object of her long journey to Vienna, and they on their side were not the least surprised. The student alone, who acted as preceptor to Simche's children, in consideration of board and lodging, manifested some astonishment.

"Have you drawn up a formal petition?" he asked. For you must know that this was one of the specialities with which the student occupied himself.

Resel replied in the affirmative, and went to look for the petition. The student took it, and began to read it in a low voice; but he had hardly perused the first few lines when he broke out into a loud laugh. Resel was terrified, and asked him if he had discovered some enormity.

* A suburb of the city of Vienna, near the Danube.

"Who drew up this petition?" he asked, still laughing.

"A notary of the municipal council."

"And with this petition you were going to see the Emperor?"

"Why not?"

"Because with this petition they will show you the door at the Emperor's."

This Resel could not believe. She was convinced that the Emperor welcomed with kindness every petition, no matter in what form, provided it set forth the required information properly.

"It is in that respect precisely that yours is wanting. This petition is a bad, unintelligible piece of composition, drawn up certainly not by a notary, but by some court-house porter. As to the style I shall say nothing."

For the moment Resel was full of anxiety; for what could she hope from a worthless petition sure to be rejected? If it excited the student's laughter, what effect would it produce on the Emperor? Then happily it occurred to her to ask the student to read the document to her; for in her hurry to start Resel and her husband had not taken the precaution to learn its contents. Moreover, how could they have imagined that from the hands of the advocate would proceed a piece of gibberish instead of a petition?

The student began with a certain malicious joy to read it; and now is a better time for us to ascertain the contents than during the imperial audience—for the Emperor will go over it in silence. We shall here inform the reader that in spite of the student's ironical and critical observations on the basis and form of the petition, it will be permitted in its present form, and without the least alteration, to reach the Emperor in person. The petition was couched in these terms :—

"Very gracious and very illustrious Emperor, your Imperial and Royal Majesty.

"I, the very humble undersigned, am but a poor woman of the people, and I have nevertheless the boldness to appear before your Imperial and Royal Majesty. But what was I to do? Your Royal and Imperial Majesty is as the light of the sun which sheds everywhere its heat and its light. And why, therefore, should a poor Jewish woman despair of obtaining some of this light? So, without too much reflection, I have travelled from Bohemia to Vienna, and now come to pray your Imperial and Royal Majesty, prostrating myself at his feet, to grant a 'family right' to Jaekev Lederer. Jaekev Lederer, Imperial and Royal Majesty, is the best man in the world, and was my betrothed when I was but twenty years old. But in spite of that Heaven overwhelmed him,

though he did not deserve it, with misfortunes; for, I ask your Imperial Majesty, was it Jaekev Lederer's fault that he was his father's fourth son? and that was why the municipal council refused him a 'family right.' Was Jaekev Lederer, then my betrothed, never to marry me? In Austria every ploughboy and woodcutter can marry as he thinks fit, and could not poor Jaekev Lederer take a wife just because he was a Jew? But in our synagogues we pray Almighty God to grant life and health to your Imperial and Royal Majesty, and whenever our officiating minister begins to chant the prayer, Jaekev Lederer and I rise and pray with the rest. On my knees then I supplicate your Royal and Imperial Majesty, my very gracious and very illustrious Emperor, that he may deign to accord a 'family right' to Jaekev Lederer. I ask this favour neither in his name nor in mine, for I have lived with Jaekev Lederer more than one-and-twenty years; but on behalf of our child, who has been inscribed at the Town Hall as illegitimate. But before Heaven, your Imperial and Royal Majesty, I swear that my child is legitimate, and that he has nothing to blush for in presence of the world! Very gracious ruler and Emperor, if you give Jaekev Lederer a 'family right,' you will save us all, ourselves and our child. Consequently, once more prostrated at your feet, I pray your Imperial and Royal Majesty to grant

this favour to Jackev Lederer, because he is a worthy man, and to consider the tears which I have so long been shedding. Your Imperial and Royal Majesty is so good, you come to the aid of so many people that you will interest yourself in the very humble undersigned; for otherwise what will become of me? If there is a woman on this earth who prays Heaven earnestly to grant your Imperial and Royal Majesty long life, health, and a glorious reign, it is certainly the very humble undersigned who in the fullest respect will die

"of your Imperial and Royal Majesty,

"The very devoted and very obedient subject,

"RESEL MIRELES."

If you have not yet recognised the author of this petition we are truly very sorry. It is certainly not the work of the municipal notary.

"And you are going to see the Emperor with that?" cried the student again when he had finished reading, and he began to laugh afresh.

But the perusal of this same petition had on the contrary greatly impressed Resel. Her eyes were full of tears. Did not the petition well depict her profound grief; and what more did she need to touch the Emperor? An inner voice, the same which had counselled her to make the journey to Vienna, spoke forcibly to her and told her to be content with the petition such as it was. So when

the student at the end of the reading allowed his impertinent observation to escape him, Resel suddenly got up and snatched the paper from his hands.

"I desire no other," she said with joy, springing from a certain pride, "the petition is good enough; it expresses my sentiments, and the Emperor will understand it."

"As you like," replied the student, shrugging his shoulders; "this petition, to say the least of it, is wretched gibberish without form or style; anyhow, I would have drawn up a better one for you."

In spite of the offer now so clearly made, Resel persisted in her design; she desired nothing different to present herself to the Emperor with. The student smiled with a disdainful air, and did not cease to shrug his shoulders.

Later on she was conducted to the imperial mansion, and there, in one of the offices of the grand master of the court, a letter of audience for the next day at eight was handed to her. Resel was the eighth in order of inscription.

In the evening they wanted to take her to the Leopold Theatre where at the time an amusing farce was being performed. She was assured that she would be highly diverted, but she replied after the manner of Hannah, Samuel's mother —"How could I go and amuse myself at

the play when my heart is full of sadness and anguish. Moreover do I know that the Emperor will grant my request? My soul is so full of grief and terror, that I am frightened by the sound of my own words." Nor did she consent to saunter about the town to look at the curiosities. "Did I come to Vienna for that?" she said. "Before all I must think of my child, that is the most interesting subject for me."

At night the poor woman found it difficult to get to sleep. The audience of the morrow, the remembrance of her husband and child, the burgomaster and the advocate; all her misfortunes as also the hope of soon seeing them vanish—these things, like vague images, passed through her mind. She still had not got to sleep when her cousin's daughters returned from the Leopold Theatre. They entered laughing and singing, and for a long time talked in bed of the jokes and the sprightliness of the whole piece. Resel half envied this lightness; she thought how lucky the people of Vienna were to be able every day to attend the theatre. Always gay and active, they enjoyed life as few enjoy it. In the *kille** on the other hand what a life people led? A life full of cares and disappointment. With these thoughts she fell asleep.

At two in the morning she was suddenly awakened by the sound of violent knocks at the

* Community.

street door. In alarm she opened her eyes. Then she beheld in the room a strange spectacle. Her cousin Simche, half naked, with a light in his hand, was running about like a perfect madman. His wife and children had similarly jumped out of bed and stood near him, their faces pale and distorted. The knocking at the door meanwhile, continued.

"For heaven's sake," cried Resel, "what is the matter? Has the house caught fire?"

"Silence, silence," was the whispered reply, "the police are at the door; we have no permit of sojourn."

The blows grew louder and more violent, and at intervals threatening voices were heard outside. In the room the perplexity had reached its height; Simche, light in hand, was still running about like a madman, and Resel could quite understand the chattering of his teeth. The student seemed to have preserved most presence of mind; he called out to Simche to do something or to open the door. The blows recommenced. Simche seemed at length to have mastered his terror. With the sheets he made a shroud, enveloped his whole body therein, and lay down in the middle of the chamber. Resel in painful expectation looked on.

"Now place a light near my head," Simche ordered, "and open the door. Tell the police I am dead!"

It was in truth a lugubrious sight; the student took the light and put it near the head of the feigned corpse. Simche's daughter covered his face with the shroud; his wife had gone to open the door to the police. A couple of policemen accompanied by some soldiers at once entered. The prostrate corpse first met their sight. The place did indeed seem to be a chamber of the dead. On every side could be seen pale and distorted faces, which indicated to the police conclusively enough the grief felt for a loved one just lost.

"When did he die?" asked one of the two policemen, approaching the body.

"An hour ago," replied the woman, trembling with fear.

The policeman lifted up the sheet from the face of the corpse, but at once let it fall.

"He is dead," he said, addressing his companion; "we have nothing more to do here." Thereupon they went away without inquiring about the permit of sojourn.

The footsteps of the policemen who had only just quitted the house could still be heard in the solitary street, when at one bound Simche jumped up and threw off the winding sheet.

"Well," he cried, "have I not well counterfeited a dead man? I lay still as a log. They are very acute."

And as though he had truly escaped from the

bonds of death all the others surrounded him, full of joy, and began to laugh and joke about the danger which just before had put them beside themselves. The light was then extinguished, every one got in bed again and a quarter of an hour afterwards tranquillity once more reigned in the rooms. No one would have imagined that a few minutes ago all had run such terrible danger.*

But Resel lay shuddering feverishly and could not close her eyes during the rest of the night. She watered her bed with tears. All this in truth presaged no good for the morrow. How, in a city where her cousin was forced to assume death in order to escape the police, could she hope to obtain a "family right" and the legitimatization of her child? From this moment she ceased to envy her cousin's daughters; did they not, by all these terrors and miseries, sufficiently expiate the pleasure of being able to attend the Leopold Theatre every day, and laugh at its drolleries?

The Emperor had read the petition—he had smiled. Resel near the door of the audience

* Only tolerated Jews, those that is to say who are accepted with the consent of the authorities, can [Anno 1848] sojourn at Vienna free from all troubles and importunities. The rest have to procure permits of sojourn; from this regulation poor hawkers—installed at Vienna in many cases from their infancy, and who wish to save the time which would be lost in applying for a permit at the *judenamt* (Jewish office)—have a particular faculty for escaping. The police—what does the police not know?—is well aware of this. Hence their nocturnal raids. Those who allow themselves thus to be surprised without a permit, are expelled by the gendarmerie. *Infandum renovare dolorem.*

chamber had fallen on her knees; she was losing her senses. Then the benevolent sovereign approached her and in a voice which had the effect of a river of gold flowing upon her, said—"Rise my child; we kneel before God alone." But Resel did not rise; from the depth of her soul she replied to the Emperor. "Pardon, pardon, your majesty! grant a 'family right' to Jaekev!"

Then the Emperor—

"Is it true," he asked, "that you have lived with him twenty-one years?"

"It will soon be twenty-two," she replied; "moreover, I have a child."

The Emperor approached the table whereon lay the petition; upon the back of it he wrote a few words.

"And now my child, you can go," he said with a gentleness full of humanity; "Jaekev shall have a 'family right'—you may rely upon it. Everything will now change to your advantage."

Resel took her departure. If at this moment her soul had quitted its terrestrial frame its first thought on passing through the radiant portal of eternity would have been to pray for the Emperor.

A month had elapsed. Resel had long since returned. For the hundredth time she had answered the various questions put to her by the curious about *her audience,* when Jaekev received a new notification from the burgomaster directing him

to attend the Town Hall. On this occasion he ascended, with his heart full of a joyful presentiment, the narrow staircase leading to office No. 3. But picture his happiness when, in the most amicable terms, the burgomaster informed him that he had received superior orders to give Jackev Lederer the first "family right" which became vacant; and as at that moment there was one to be had he had merely to apply for it—no one else would get it.

A fortnight later Jaekev was a *familiant*. Then the strange question arose in the minds of the married couple whether they ought not to celebrate their nuptials afresh.

Jaekev was little disposed to do so, "for," he said, "I am a *familiant* now, and what else do I care for?"

But Resel replied—

"No, Jaekev, that is not what I think. I went to Vienna to procure a family right, and so I am entitled to marry in a becoming way. Let us then send in a request for a *reschojin*.*

The whole ghetto approved this resolution. Once more was made up the big packet of testimonials, attestations, and certificates which we have mentioned before. The Emperor in his kindness had given Jaekev a family right, but a *reschojin* was yet wanting. The affair would take the

* Authorisation.

ordinary course. It was pleasant to see the old pair being examined in the "Children of Zion"—more pleasant still the incident to which this gave rise.

"Tell me," said the Chief of the Community, who examined them, "tell me the duties of a mother towards her children."

Resel reflected a long time; then, her whole face beaming, she replied—

"To love them, sir."

The Chief of the Community looked at the Rabbi, and the Rabbi at the commissary. Both were smiling at the woman's simplicity.

"And you," Jaekev was asked, "tell me what the tenth commandment says?'"

For the moment Jaekev could not recollect it. Then the chief Rabbi, to assist his memory, himself began to repeat the commandment.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife"—

"A strange question that, my dear Rabbi," said Jaekev, with a smile; "should I so long have waited for my Resel if I had eyes for another man's wife? God did not make that commandment for me."

The Chief of the Community laughingly liberated the old couple of lovers and attested the fact that they had well passed the "Children of Zion." This at bottom no one doubted, for Jaekev and Resel quite understood its moral teaching.

This time the *reschojin* did not hold them in

suspense fourteen years. They had but fourteen weeks to wait for it. Herein was a notable difference.

The marriage day was fixed.

The benediction under the nuptial dais was not now given by a poor Rabbi in a village, but by the chief Rabbi, and, according to custom, in the open air. Resel wore a silk dress, and this time only tears of joy were shed beneath her gold-embroidered cap. Jaekev was so pleased with her that he said—

"You look, to-day, like a young woman of twenty."

The noisiest gaiety went on throughout the nuptial repast. Every one in the ghetto had made presents to the married couple. The rich Schmull Brandeis moreover had deigned to offer the young couple four silver candlesticks.

Towards evening when the joy was at its height Salme Floh, who figured among the guests, suddenly jumped up at table and demanded silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he cried, "I am going to ask you a riddle. Who among us came too early for the wedding?"

"Jaekev and Resel," was the reply from all sides.

"Not at all, not at all," cried the proposer of the enigma; "it was little Benjamin Jaekev; he came eight years too early."

And at this even Resel, who did not as a rule

like jokes on this subject, laughed and shook with the rest.

The advocate, Rebb L. ɔmann Goldberg, sprang up in his turn.

"All of you see," he cried, "little Benjamin Jaekev tranquilly seated at the nuptial repast eating a tart. Now to whom do you think he owes that?"

"Resele, Resele," they exclaimed on all sides; "didn't she visit the Emperor?"

"Not at all, not at all," he cried in his turn; "he owes it to me; for I wrote the petition to the Emperor."

These words caused general astonishment. Then Lippmann explained how instead of going to the notary he had himself drawn up the petition in order that the Emperor might see his handwriting. Thereupon loud laughter from the married pair, and universal uproar.

But, Mr. Advocate, did we not know all this at Vienna?

THE END.

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